

# Hagar The Princess

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The Mother of the Arabs

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&  
**Ishmael**

*The Father of Twelve Princes*



**Muhammad Ashraf Chheenah**

Edited by

**Abdus Sattar Ghauri**

Fellow, Al-Mawrid, Model Town, Lahore

I. S. R. C.

Interfaith Study and Research Centre

# Hagar: The Princess,

The Mother of the Arabs;

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Second (Revised) Edition

by

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INTERFAITH STUDY AND RESEARCH CENTRE  
(I S R C)

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**And Ishmael, *The Father of Twelve Princes***

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## DEDICATION

To

UMM AL-MU'MININ

HAGAR (Blessings of Allah on Her),

THE MOTHER OF THE ARABS

AND TO

THE BELIEVERS: THE WORLD OVER

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I feel deeply indebted to Mr. Abdus Sattar Ghauri, who not only provided me the guidance for the research but also rendered valuable help to procure many of the books without which it would have been impossible for me to do justice with the theme. In spite of his preoccupations and ailing health, Mr. Ghauri's wholehearted involvement and contribution to improve the book cannot be treated as an ordinary contribution from him. While much of the material was added to the book on his advice yet he retained many of my personal observations and opinions to maintain the originality of the work. The author alone is, therefore responsible for the overall framework, direction of the argumentation and the spirit of the book.

I must also thank my wife, Nighat Parveen, who suffered the most as a result of my involvement in the process; my sons: Mr. Rizwan Chheenah, Mr. 'Umr Chheenah, and Mr. Hāsan Chheenah, for relieving me from business undertakings; and my Daughters-in-law: 'Āsīmāh, Mahnāz, and Malīhāh; who, besides their encouragement and cooperation in my task, patiently tolerated my absence and lack of interest and attention in the family affairs. May God compensate them with His bounteous blessings for all the help they have rendered to me to accomplish my undertakings.

My thanks are also due to Mr. Haroon Rasheed who composed the book with utmost devotion to his assignment. May he enjoy a richer, fuller and prosperous life in future.

Muhammad Ashraf Chheenah





## COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

AD/CE	<i>anno domini</i> (Latin), in the year of the Lord, Common/ Christian Era.
Ar	Arab, Arabia, Arabian, Arabic.
B	Bible.
BC	Before Christ; Bible Commentary; Biblical Commentary.
BCE	Before Christian/Common Era.
BD	Bible Dictionary.
c/ca	About, approximately (Latin <i>circa</i> )
CB	Commentary of the Bible.
CE	Common Era: secular form of AD.
Cf	confer: compare.
Ch	Chapter.
DB	Dictionary of the Bible.
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls.
E	East.
E	Elohistic tradition of some books of the OT of the Bible.
Ed	Editor, edited by, edition.
Edn	Edition.
e.g./eg	for example (Latin <i>exempli gratia</i> ).
Enc	Encyclopedia/Encyclopaedia/Encyclopedic.
Esp	especially.
Hm	Headmaster.
Heb	Hebrew.
i.e.	that is, that means, namely.
J	Jehovist or Yahwist tradition of some books of the OT of the Bible.
JE	Text of the OT based on the combination of the E & J Traditions Of the Bible.
L	Latin.
LLX	Septuagint (70): Greek Tr. of the OT claimed to be accomplished by 70 scholars in Alexandria between 250 –150 BC.
MS/MSs	Manuscript/Manuscripts.
MT/Mt	Massoretic /Masoretic Text of the OT; Matthew; Mount.
N	North.
NT	New Testament of the Bible Contains 27 books: 4 Gospels, Acts, Epistles (letters), and lastly Revelations. It was originally written in Greek, whereas Jesus Christ delivered his message in the Aramaic language.
op.cit.	in the work already quoted (Latin <i>opere citato</i> ).
OT	Old Testament of the Bible Consists of 39 books: The first five are collectively called the Pentateuch or Torah. It was originally written in Heb.
(pbAh)	peace and blessings of Allah upon him.
p/pp	Page/pages.
P	Priestly tradition of the OT of the Bible.
Pbl/pbg	Publisher(s) Publication(s) /Publishing/.

Q	<i>Quelle</i> (a German word), i.e. source. A hypothetical source of the passages shared by the gospels of Matthew and Luke.
Rvd	Revised.
S	South, southern.
Sic.	[L] thus, so: used within brackets, [sic], to show that a quoted passage, esp. one containing some error or s.th. questionable, is precisely reproduced.
s.o.	Some one.
s.th.	Some thing.
St	Saint.
s.v.	Under the word or heading.
Tr.	Translator, translation, translated by.
Uni./Univ.	University.
v/vv	Verse/verses of the Bible.
V	Version (Tr.) of the Bible.
Vol.	Volume.
Vulg.	Vulgate, the Latin Tr. Of the Bible accomplished by St Jerome in late 4 <sup>th</sup> century AD.
W	West, western.
Y	Yahwist (Jehovist) tradition of the Bible.
(...)	It indicates that some word, words, sentence, sentences, line, or lines have been left over from the original quotation.
(....)	It shows that a sizeable text has been omitted from the original quotation.
[]	The square brackets are used to insert something by the Tr./Ed., which did not originally exist in the quotation.
AV/KJV	<i>Authorized Version/King James Version.</i>
CCB	<i>The Christian Community Bible</i> (Manila: Divine Word Pbln, 1988).
CEV	<i>Contemporary English Version</i> (NY: American Bible Society, 1995).
Douay V	The Douay Challoner & Confraternity Text (Chicago: Catholic Press, 1950)
GNB/TEV	<i>Good News Bible/ Today's English Version -do-.</i>
GNB:REV	<i>Good News Bible</i> (Revised Edn), Minto: The B. Society in Australia Inc. NSW.
LB	The Living Bible (Illinois: Tyndale House Pblshrs. 1976)
MT	<i>The Torah, The Mesoretic Text</i> (Jewish Pbln. Society of America).
NAB	<i>New American Bible</i> , Catholic Bible Association, 1991.
NASB	<i>The New American Standard Bible</i> , Cambridge Univ. Press 1977.
NEB	<i>The New English Bible</i> , Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.
NIV	<i>New international Version</i> , London, 1984.
NJB	<i>The New Jerusalem Bible</i> , Standard Edn, Bombay: St. Paul's, 1993.
NKJV	<i>New King James Version.</i> <i>New Living Translation</i> , 1996: NLTr.
NOAB.	<i>The New Oxf. Annotated B: New Revised Standard Version: NRSV.</i>
RSV.	<i>Revised Standard Version.</i> Revised Berkeley Version: RBV.
Peshitta	The Authorised B. of the Church of the East, 1957.
Knox	Ronald A.Knox, Tr. From the Vulgate, Macmillan & Co. 1957.

## **PREFACE**

Even a cursory glance at the Old Testament reveals that the Israelites had been the main theme of the Hebrew Scripture. Everything revolves around the Israelites. So much so that even God is acknowledged and worshiped as the God of Israel. Genealogies are recorded in the Genesis only to trace out the link of the Israelites with Adam (pbAh), Noah (pbAh) and Abraham (pbAh). They claim themselves the first born sons of God, the Chosen race and the only people of God. Being an ethnic Group, they assert their primacy over others and proclaim themselves as the only legitimate descendants of Abraham (pbAh). As such, they assert their exclusive claim over the inheritance of the land and blessings of the Lord promised to Abraham (pbAh) and his descendants.

As against the boastful assertions of the Israelites, we find first introduction of the race as slaves in Egypt. They appear on the screen as an oppressed people leading a miserable life as slaves when God heard them cry out to be rescued from their masters forcing them to work under the slave drivers. God took pity on them and after delivering them from the subjugation, He led them to spacious and fertile lands of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizites, The Hivites and the Jebusites etc. (Ex 3:7-8). In addition to the worldly gains, the Lord also bestowed upon them His bounteous blessings in the shape of so many prophets including prophets like Joseph (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), Aaron (pbAh), Joshua (pbAh), David (pbAh), Solomon (pbAh), Eliah (pbAh), Jeremiah (pbAh), Isaiah (pbAh), John the Baptist (pbAh),

Jesus Christ (pbAh), etc. Hence, during a particular time in their history, they excelled spiritually over all other nations in the world.

The special favor conferred on the Israelites by the Lord was His covenant with them under which He gave them the Law, the like of which had never been given to any other nation before them. This was the most precious privilege and even the pride of the Israelites. Being custodians or trustees of the covenant, they were duty bound to keep the word of God intact for all times and to pass it on to their descendants and other nations around them. The law also obliged them to worship no one except the Lord of the universe and to depend entirely on Him for all their needs. They were duty bound to obey all the commandments of the Lord and to do good deeds as enjoined in the Law. These special favors of God required a grateful response from the Israelites. Instead of devotion to the Lord, the Israelites gave priority to their immediate needs and other worldly benefits for the community. Hence, instead of wholehearted submission to the will of God, they attached priority to their temporal gains and rebelled against the Lord and also the Prophets whenever they found any commandment of the Lord conflicting with the interests of the Israelites. The History of Israel, therefore, shows them committing every type of immorality to acquire land, wealth, power and other benefits for the ethnic community. Being homeless people, they were land hungry to such an extent that they seemed to have loved the land much more than the Lord. To acquire the same, they inflicted all types of atrocities on the original owners of Canaan. Their obstinacy and disobedience to the commandments of

the Lord, therefore, brought numerous afflictions on them at various times but ultimately they stood accursed and condemned by the Lord.

Factually, the Israelites have always been a small people holding small tracts of land as compared to other nations of the world. Even after their deliverance from Egypt, they had been homeless wanderers in the wilderness. After their conquests in Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, they had undulating periods of success and defeat at the hands of the original occupants of Canaan. Their prolonged period of slavery and humility developed an inferiority complex in them. As a reaction to the said feeling of obsession, they started to assert their greatness by exaggerating their achievements or by condemning or debasing their rivals such as the Amalekites, the Canaanites, the Moabites, the Amorites, the Edomites, the Ishmaelites, the Midianites and many other nations around them. Hence, in their eagerness to prove themselves greater than all other nations in the world, they even introduced corruptions in the revealed word of God through concealment, alteration, addition, or deletion in the text. Instead of proclaiming the greatness of the Lord and serving Him wholeheartedly, they continued to boast of their supremacy over others. With such motives in view, the Israelites concocted fictitious episodes or certain commandments of the Lord to prove superiority of the Israelites over the nations contending with them. In the present work it has been endeavoured to expose the untruth of the allegations levelled by the Israelites against their rivals. The present volume titled (*Hagar the Princess*), is the second Volume in the series i.e. '*Israelites Vs Other Nations of the World*'.

Almost every person believes that truth is the greatest virtue in the world while the untruth is the most heinous of the crimes. Ever increasing information and advancement of knowledge in the world provide better opportunities to analyze the facts to arrive at the truth and to differentiate it from the untruth. It is towards this end that a fresh study of the available data and the circumstantial evidence be undertaken to evaluate various assertions in the Bible. It is hoped that such efforts would not disappoint the seekers after the truth to form an independent and objective opinion about different assertions in the OT.

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Chairman

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December, 2011.

## Editor's Note

It was not easy to say 'yes' to such an extraordinarily gigantic undertaking as editing and updating this uniquely superb piece of research on Inter-Faith Dialogue and comparative religion by Mr. Muhāammad Ashraf Cheenah. For a physically weak, ailing, and aged person, as the editor is, it was a consuming task and required a deep and devoted study. It is a rare phenomenon that some Muslim scholar might choose this field of study, and keeping in view the courageous task adopted by Cheenah Sāhib, the editor considered it a privilege to render his service in the task.

The author, Mr. Muhāammad Ashraf Cheenah, is an erudite scholar, having wonderfully deep and vast study of the relevant works to his credit. He is lucky to have a good library of valuable books of his own, which are not easily available here. He is a practicing Muslim and a devoted writer in his field. May Almighty Allah bless him with success and guidance in his undertakings. His style of presentation and his command on the word and theme is explicitly evident from the very 'preface' of this work.

While editing the work, the editor felt very odd to tackle the repetition. Much effort has been exerted to weed it out, but still there is a lot of it. However, the reader would appreciate that sometimes it is useful as well, to a great extent. Turning back the pages to find the relevant material repeatedly would have caused much unrest and hardship to the reader. It is now reader friendly as well as it might help the reader to keep in mind some useful material in this unique and ignored field of learning, and it is worth the labour put in the task.



(PBUH) is generally used with the names of the Prophets but it is not the exact translation of 'صلي الله عليه و سلم'. The editor has used (pbAh) as the abbreviation for 'peace and blessings of Allah on him', which is the exact rendering for the Arabic phrase.

The editor has also inserted 'A Brief Account of the Chapters of the Book' so that the reader be acquainted with the contents of the book at a glance.

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## A Note to the 2nd (Revised) Edn:

The first edition of this book was sent to press in a bit of hurry. Now enjoying more ease and liberty the editor has made a thorough revision of the work. Previously it had 27 chapters. There was much repetition in previous Ch. 4, 25 and Ch. 7, 12. To avoid repetition and confusion they have, now, been merged in two chapters: 06-*God's Blessings for Hagar and Ishmael*; and 23-*Ishmael the Son of Promise*. The editor is thankful to his son, Dr. Ihsan-ur-Rahman Ghauri, Asstt Prof, Punjab Univ, who revised, updated, and rewritten these chapters. The book, now, contains 25 chapters. I have thoroughly gone through his task and found it quite up to the mark. In addition to the general revision of the whole book, the present Ch. 1, 7, 8, 11, 14, 25 have been copiously revised.

Editor

## A Brief Account of the Chapters of the Book

To depict the progeny of Ishmael inferior to their own race, the Israelites have tried to ascribe slavery to his mother Hagar; whereas actually she was a princess. It is to be noted that even some early biblical scholars have presented her as the daughter of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. The Bible itself affirms that God had asserted about Ishmael: 'twelve princes shall he beget.' (Gen 17:20). In the following pages a study has been undertaken to ascertain the real position.

The book contains 25 chapters and two appendices. The **First chapter** is entitled as '*Hagar the Mother of Ishmael and not a Slave-girl of Sarah*'. The Bible asserts that Abraham (pbAh) had willingly let his wife Sarah to be handed over to the king as a shameful business, and received cattle, sheep, slaves, and gold in return. But according to the Bible Hagar was not given to Sarah; whatever was given was given to Abraham. As such there is nothing on record that Hagar was given to Sarah as a slave.

'*Weaning of Isaac; Hagar and Ishmael Sent away*' is the title of the **Second chapter**. Isaac was weaned between the age of 5 to 7 years and Abraham arranged a great feast at this occasion. Sarah saw Ishmael playing (or in the words of KJV 'mocking') and asked Abraham (pbAh) to 'cast out this bondwoman and her son [Ishmael]'. There seem to be a lot of interpolations in the text of the Bible to show the superiority of the Israelites over the contesting nations and to establish exclusive right of Israel for the inheritance of the so-

called 'Promised Land'.

Chapter 3 relates to '*So-called Affliction of Hagar and Distress of Abraham and Sarah*'. Hagar was a contented soul and had no cause of worry or distress. She was young and unmarried and had not to be worried about having children. Moreover, even after marriage with Abraham, she immediately became 'with child'. According to the Bible, Sarah and Abraham felt distressed for being issueless. Abraham even showed impatience and complaint for having no heir, which is unbecoming of the great prophet. Sarah extended maltreatment towards Hagar out of jealousy; and cast her away. The angel of God instead of redressing the wrong done to Hagar and admonishing the oppressor Sarah, persuaded her to submit to Sarah as a slave. Even God did not come to her rescue and implicitly approved the atrocities of Sarah towards Hagar. It can thus be safely concluded that the conduct of Sarah, Abraham, angel of God, and God Himself had been depicted as unbecoming by the Bible which a Muslim cannot believe. However, Hagar stands patient, sober, and undisturbed even according to the Bible. Obviously, the credibility of Biblical assertions becomes dubious.

Chapter 4 relates to '*God's Promises and Blessings for Abraham*'. *Firstly* God had promised to Ishmael and Hagar to make Ishmael a great nation. God had also entered into a covenant with Israel; but they broke it again and again. They worshiped the gods of other nations and transgressed the law. Subsequently they were punished and dispersed into various parts of the world. Then there was the *Second Promise* to multiply exceedingly which is quite obvious. It was

extended to Abraham and Ishmael. Subsequently there are thousands of millions of Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael in Arab countries and other Muslim and non-Muslim countries. The *Third Promise* also extended to Abraham and Ishmael which was regarding 'exceeding fruitful'. History bears ample witness to it. Thousands of millions of the Muslims the world over is a sufficient proof to it; whereas the Jews are a close clan and void of any flourishes by their very nature. The *Fourth Promise* relates to bless Abraham. God had blessed Ishmael as well (Gen 17:20). The Muslims bless Abraham and his descendants in their five time daily prayers; but there is no such tradition among the Jews. The defying conduct of Jews has rather brought curse to them and they are a curse to the world. They refuse any blessings outside their own clan.

Chapter 5 deals with '*Universality of Faith in Islam and the Restrictive Concept of God in Judaism*'. The Qur'ānic verses containing the phrases such as the following are a proof of the universality of Islam:

الحمد لله رب العالمين . 1 وما أرسلناك إلا رحمة للعالمين . 2 يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا أَنَا لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ . 3 تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا . 4 هَذَا بَلَاغٌ لِلنَّاسِ . 5 وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا . 6 وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا . 7 أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ . 8 وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ . 9 قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qur'ān 1:1.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qur'ān Al-Anbiyā (The Prophets) 21:107.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Qur'ān 22:49.

<sup>4</sup> Al- Qur'ān, Al-Furqan 25:1.

<sup>5</sup> Al- Qur'ān, Abraham, 14:52.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Saba 34:28.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:79.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Qur'ān 10:3.

إِنَّمَا أَنَا لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ. <sup>10</sup> إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى  
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ. <sup>11</sup> إِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا. <sup>12</sup> وَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ  
سَوَاء الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ (...). وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ. <sup>13</sup>

As against the universality of faith in Islam, the Israelites refused to share God or His blessings with others. The 12 tribes of Israel had always been the concern of Israel and the '*God of Israel*' seems to have disowned all mankind except them. This shows that the promise of the Lord to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham (pbAh) did not materialize through the Israelites.

Chapter-6 is '*God's Blessings on Hagar and Ishmael* (pbAh)'. Gen: 16:10 asserts that the Lord blessed Hagar in the following words: 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude.' Gen 21:17-20 GNB says: 'God heard the boy crying, and from heaven the angel of God spoke to Hagar, "What are you troubled about [in KJV: 'what aileth thee'], Hagar? Don't be afraid. God has heard the boy crying. Get up, go and pick him up, and comfort him. I will make a great nation out of his descendants." (...) God was with the boy as he grew up;' This affirms that both Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) were bounteously blessed by the Lord. The other assurance, *that God was with the boy as he grew up*, is a clear-cut warning that nobody should dare to despise or denounce Ishmael (pbAh). It was not, therefore,

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<sup>9</sup> Al-Qur'ān 14:44.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Qur'ān 22:49.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Qur'ān 3:96.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:125.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Al-Hajj 22:25-29.

conceivable that Abraham (pbAh) had thrown away without any concern the gifts of God, i.e. Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh), only to satisfy the jealousy of Sarah. History testifies to the blessings of the Lord in the descendants and followers of Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh). God repeatedly affirmed him as seed as well as son of Abraham (pbAh). The OT testified that God appeared to Hagar twice. When the Lord himself designates the descendants of Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) as 12 princes and promises to make them a great nation, no believer in the Lord could dare deny the blessings of the Lord on them.

**Chapter 7** is: '*The Seed of Abraham* (pbAh)'. The last sentence of Gen 21:12, i.e. 'in Isaac shall thy seed be called' is evidently an interpolation. Its contradiction with the very next verse, where it has been asserted about Ishmael (pbAh) 'because he is thy seed', clearly exposes this interpolation. It is also exposed by the following:

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be also numbered.<sup>14</sup>

As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. (...): for a father of many nations have I made thee. (...). And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.<sup>15</sup>

Because all these verses show Abraham (pbAh) as the

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<sup>14</sup> Gen. 13:16 KJV.

<sup>15</sup> Gen. 17:4-5, 20 KJV; as well as Gen. 21:13, 18 KJV.

father of many nations and also confirm Ishmael as the son of Abraham, therefore, *confining the descendants of Abraham to Isaac is wrong*. Besides Isaac, God had granted Abraham his first born Ishmael and six other sons from his wife Keturah. All descendants from these sons of Abraham were the genuine, legitimate and factual seed of Abraham.

The title of **Chapter 8** is: '*Why the Derogatory Remarks Against Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh): Revenge or Inferiority Complex?*' The Israelites remained enslaved and oppressed under the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians in the ancient past. Due to the age-long periods of slavery, depression, forced hard labour and exile coupled with repeated defeats at the hands of powerful nations; the Israelites developed deep-rooted inferiority complex and posed themselves superior to other nations in the region.

The title of **Chapter 9** is: '*The Lame Excuse for Expulsion*'. Playing of Ishmael with Isaac at the time of the weaning feast is not any offence or sufficient reason to call for a punishment of expulsion from the family. It is obviously a lame excuse. It is merely out of jealousy against the grace, sovereignty, and prosperity of the descendants of Ishmael that the Israelites put the blame of casting away etc on them. The Israeli scribes made mischievous insertions in the Genesis to establish a fallacious primacy of the Israelites over all other nations in the region.

**Chapter 10** is entitled as '*Ishmael (pbAh), the First Born of Abraham (pbAh) and not the Son of a Slave Girl*'. Abraham was childless even till his mid-eighties

and he prayed to God for some pious progeny. Ishmael (pbAh) was born in response to the prayers of Abraham (pbAh) in his old age of his legitimate and lawful wife, Hagar, an Egyptian princess. He was named Ishmael (pbAh), which means '*God hears*' or '*God has heard*'. Ishmael was Abraham's legitimate and lawful first-born son, for all purposes, and according to all canons of justice and equity. Isaac was born after fourteen years of Ishmael's birth and Ishmael remained the only son of Abraham till the age of fourteen. Hagar was a princess and daughter of Pharaoh, and not a slave girl. Even if it be supposed that Hagar was a slave girl, she could have only been the slave of Abraham (pbAh); and not of Sarah. Some sound arguments have also been placed in the chapter to dispel the misconception about the slavery of Hagar.

The title of *Chapter 11* is: '*Hagar, The Princess, and Her Embracing the faith of Abraham* (pbAh).' It is reported in *The Chumash*, p. 71: 'Hagar was a daughter of Pharaoh. (...). [He thought:] 'Better that she be a servant in their house than a princess in someone else's.' *The Chumash* further asserts: 'Despite her many years in the home of Abraham and Sarah, *Hagar remained an Egyptian princess*.' On the other hand Abraham (pbAh) was of a captivating, commanding, convincing, and attracting personality. The king and his courtiers must have been impressed by the sagacity, knowledge, and majestic appearance of Abraham (pbAh), as well as his eloquence in expressing his faith and his powerfully argumentative preaching for the worship of the single Creator of the universe. Princess Hagar might also have been attending her father's



court. She would definitely have been impressed by the towering personality, majestic performance, and captivating eloquence of the stranger. Discerning the signs of truth, force of argumentation, spiritual superiority, moral grace, and the sagacity of the princely person, she might herself have embraced the faith. Observing the miracles of the family and inclination of Hagar to accept the faith of Abraham (pbAh), the king might have allowed her to serve the Prophet.

The title of **Chapter 12** is: '*Sayyidah Hājirah: The Mother of the Believers*'. Sayyidah Hājirah was one of the ideal ladies of the world. Ever since she was acquainted to Abraham (pbAh), her life was a life of continuous devotion, piety and sacrifice till her death. She willingly opted for sacrificing her royal heritage, worldly comforts and her glorious future as a would-be queen at the palace of some king. Ever since she was acquainted to Abraham (pbAh), her life was a life of continuous devotion, piety and sacrifice till her death. Sayyidah Hājira had again the *unique honor of willingly and unflinchingly offering her only son Ishmael* for sacrifice being fully aware that after the sacrifice of Ishmael, she would be left alone to face all types of hazards. Her wholehearted submission to the will of the Lord is exemplary. Although the Jews and the Christians labeled her with slavery and a cast out, yet God exalted her. *The piety, the nobility, and the devotedness of Hagar are par-excellence* and without a parallel. Salaam on her!

The topic of **Chapter 13** is: '*God shall Bless those who Bless Abraham: It is only the Muslims who bless*

*him Daily (and not the Jews and the Christians)'. The Bible has depicted Abraham (pbAh) as: (1) Telling lies; (2) Deceiving Pharaoh of Egypt and king Abimelech of Gerar; (3) Amassing wealth at the cost of the chastity of his faithful and pious wife, Sarah. He seems to be willing to exchange his wife for sheep, goats, slaves and gold etc without any prick of conscience; (4) Thankless and distrustful to God; and (5) Ruthlessly doing injustice to Hagar his wife and Ishmael his first born son. On the other hand the Muslim nations bless Abraham (pbAh) several times a day during their five-time daily prayers. Instead of blessing Abraham (pbAh), the Jews tarnish the luminous figure of the patriarch. In spite of this, they claim the entire inheritance of the material wealth, the land and other blessings on the pretension that they are the only legitimate descendants of Abraham. The Evangelists too attach little importance to Abraham. **Mark** has mentioned Abraham only once in his gospel; **Matthew** about seven times, but the first three references pertain to genealogy only; **Luke** about 15 times and **John** about eight times. But none has uttered even a single word to bless him. John reports Abraham as saying: '*Before Abraham was, I am.*' These words dwarf or belittle Abraham (pbAh) as compared to Jesus (pbAh). Hence, John, instead of blessing Abraham (pbAh), has actually deprecated him only to magnify or glorify the figure of Jesus Christ. **St. Paul** suggests spiritual inferiority of Abraham as compared to Melchizedek.*

**Chapter 14** is: '*Melchisedek: A New Find in Faith*'. There is scanty mention of Melchizedek in the Bible only to serve the purpose of St. Paul and some others. Even the authorities of the Bible are doubtful

of its credibility.

Chapter 15 deals with '*St. Paul's Diversion from the Law of Moses* (pbAh)'. Firstly the Greeks and then the Romans tried their best to eliminate Judaism and the Law of Moses; but all their efforts failed in spite of killing thousands of people. St. Paul took him up on the task of destroying monotheism and the Law of Moses (pbAh) to replace the same with the concept of trinity and the law of the Romans throughout the Roman Empire. In this way the Roman world could succeed to attain uniformity of religion and law in the lands controlled by them. But Jews had been the hard nut to crack. St. Paul tried to replace monotheism by the divinity of Jesus Christ (pbAh) and the Holy Ghost; and to destroy the basis of the Jewish faith which professed that salvation depended on good deeds in accordance with the commandments of God. He developed his theory of salvation through faith. . *Abraham (pbAh) never had any faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ (pbAh) or the Holy Ghost as introduced by St. Paul.*

Chapter 16 is about the '*Exaggerated Assertions of the Israelites*'. The Bible records the promise of God about innumerable descendants of Abraham (Gen 13:16; 15:5 KJV). It was fulfilled initially through the descendants of Hagar: 'And the angel of the LORD said unto her [Hagar], I will multiply *thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude* [Gen 16:10 KJV]. The fact is that no body has ever been able to number the descendants of Hagar through Ishmael (pbAh) and the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) through his six other sons from

Keturah. As for the Israelites, they never grew up to such a large extent that they could not be counted by numbers. On the other hand the family of Israel (Jacob) consisted of only about 16 persons when Jacob (pbAh) returned home from Laban. The direct descendants of Jacob (pbAh) who went to Egypt were 70 excluding the wives of 11 sons of Jacob (Gen. 46: 26 - 27). Later on, number of the Israelites becomes extremely exaggerated.

**Chapter 17** is: '*Promises with Abraham* (pbAh) *Reapplied to Isaac*'. Gen 17:16, 19 and 26:3-4 (KJV) given at the end of the above chapter pertained to Abraham but the Israelites reapplied the same to Isaac so that they may be depicted as the sole beneficiary of the said blessings. The interpolation in the text is evident from the fact that neither Isaac nor his descendants held everlasting possession of the promised countries nor all the nations were blessed through the Israelites. The timidity and the shameful concealment about the true relation of Isaac with Rebecca shows Isaac lacking faith that 'God was with him'. Similarly, the first part of v. 4 i.e 'I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven' seems to be a later insertion in Gen 15:5. This prediction pertaining to Abraham has obviously been re-applied on Isaac.

**Chapter 18** deals with '*Promise Regarding the Land of Canaan*'. The Bible contains repeated promises of the Lord with Abraham to give the entire land of Canaan to him and his descendants as their everlasting possession. But we observe that he possessed no land till his death except the field of Macphela purchased from the Hittites to bury Sarah there. Isaac and Jacob also did not possess any land in Canaan. It was Joshua

under whom the descendants of Abraham through Jacob defeated the Amorites, Canaanites, Perizites, and several other small kingdoms as detailed in Jos. 12:8-24. It was the first foothold of the Israelites in Canaan. In view of the non fulfillment of the promise of land with Abraham, it can be presumed that the Lord had not made any promise of the land of Canaan with him while commanding him to go to Canaan. It took about 475 years to the promise to be fulfilled. Finally, in about 130 AD, the Israelites were crushed and thrown out by the Romans and they were forbidden from the land for the next two thousand years. During about 4000 years since Abraham (pbAh), the Israelites held only parts of the Holy Land for about 700 years. The Ishmaelites i.e. the Muslims held effective control of the said lands much longer as compared with the Israelites etc. As such, it will be wrong to presume that the Israelites were the only descendants of Abraham or that the Lord had promised permanent possession of Canaan only to the Israelites.

The title of **Chapter 19** is '*No Primacy to Isaac over Ishmael*'. Ishmael (pbAh) was a Rasūl (Messenger/Apostle) like Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), Jesus (pbAh) and Muhammad (pbAh). Isaac (pbAh) was simply a prophet (Nabī) like Jacob (pbAh), Joseph (pbAh), Joshua (pbAh), Solomon (pbAh), Zechariah (pbAh) and John the Baptist (pbAh) etc. The Bible has not mentioned Isaac or Jacob as Prophets but the Qur'ān has eulogized them by counting them among the most exalted prophets of the Lord (Al Qur'ān 19:49-50). Bible depicts Isaac (pbAh) leading almost inactive life without showing any vigor or prominence. *The Expositor's Dic. of the Texts*

observes: 'Isaac is distinctively a female type. He reveals human nature in a passive attitude.' Karen Armstrong depicts says: 'The Bible seems to indicate that Isaac lacked the resilience of Ishmael his half brother. (...) we see Isaac as a prematurely aged, blind and dying man (....). *Isaac was one of those damaged children who have experienced this parental hostility [of offering] to the full.* Abraham himself seemed to have little faith in Isaac, (...). In some ways, he shared the characteristics of an accursed man: he was paralyzed, passive, and death bound.' The story of Ishmael was strikingly different from that of Isaac. He was a prodigious son of Abraham born through Hagar, the youthful princess of Egypt. The outstanding qualities of Ishmael were not acceptable to the Israelites.

Chapter 20 deals with the '*Priority of the Ishmaelites over the Israelites*'. Born in about 1881 BC, Ishmael was brought up as a self-supporting, independent and fast-growing youthful person in an open Bedouin environment and congenial atmosphere. He might have married at an early age of about 17-20 years; possibly between 1864-1861 BC. In due course he got twelve sons and they started multiplying at Makkah to make a flourishing tribe. Isaac was born in 1867 BC, i.e. about 14 years after Ishmael. He married at the age of 40 years i.e. in about 1827 BC Jacob married Leah and Rachel in 1723 BC when Jacob (pbAh) was 84 years. The difference between the start of the multiplication of the offspring of Ishmael and Jacob comes out to be about 141 years. As such the multiplication of the Ishmaelites had started about 141 years before the Israelites and Ishmaelites were about four generations ahead of the

Israelites. The Ishmaelites might have grown into several tribes by the time Jacob was entering Egypt with his family consisting of 70 persons in all. Moreover the Israelites were the progeny of a sterile, barren and aged mother; whereas the Ishmaelites' grand mother was a youthful, fertile and healthy woman. Due to their priesthood of Ka'bah, they were enjoying sanctity and prestige in the entire region around Makkah. While the twelve sons of Jacob were mere shepherds, the Ishmaelites had gained monopoly over the trade between Yemen, Canaan, Mesopotamia and Egypt. The Israelites remained enslaved under the Egyptians whereas the Ishmaelites always enjoyed freedom and sovereignty not only over the entire Arabian Peninsula, but also over some neighbouring countries. After the exodus, the Israelites spent about forty years as homeless and destitute wanderers in the wilderness. They got their first relief under Joshua when they gained some land in Canaan, but their strong-hold on the land was established only for less than a century during ca. 1000 BC to 925 BC.

Chapter 21 is entitled as '*Ishmael: the Righteous, Tender-hearted and Enduring*'. Abraham had specifically prayed for a *righteous son* which was granted by God. It repudiates the false allegations of the Israelites about quarrelsome or idolatrous character of Ishmael. The Lord also used the appellation of خَلِيم, which, aside from nobility and tender-heartedness, denotes 'readiness to suffer and endure. It refutes the allegation of the Gen that he 'will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him.' Had Ishmael (pbAh) been a wild man, he and his sons being extremely powerful as

compared to Isaac (pbAh), they would have deprived him of all material inheritance of Abraham. Moreover, he had been dedicated to the service of Almighty Allah and His house (Bayt Allah), the Ka'bah, leaving aside all worldly inheritance.

The theme of **Chapter 22** is '*Ishmael the Spiritual Inheritor of Abraham*'. Ishmael was dedicated to the house of the Lord. As such he had primary claim to the spiritual inheritance from Abraham. The Lord declared him a messenger (رسول) while Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were prophets (نبي). Being exalted to the higher spiritual status, Ishmael never received any inheritance from the worldly wealth of Abraham. Though Ishmael and his twelve sons along with their descendants were much more numerous and powerful than Isaac and his two sons, yet we do not find them claiming or usurping anything from Isaac or his sons any inheritance from Abraham (pbAh). It is only the Israelites who have always remained obsessed with the inheritance of material wealth and land of Canaan from Abraham. The Israelites always preferred the material aspects of their lives. Even Moses (pbAh) failed to inculcate godliness in them.

**Chapter-23** is '*Ishmael, the Son promised by the Lord*'. Abraham was given the good news 'he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. (Gen 15:4)'; it was not extended to Sarah for having a child out of her womb. So the promise relates to Ishmael, and by no means, relates to Isaac. The Qur'ān also affirms that Abraham (pbAh) had prayed for a righteous son while leaving his home land, which was conceded by the Almighty. So Ishmael (pbAh) was the prime successor of Abraham (pbAh) and his rightful



heir. But the Israelites do not admit it and changed the Bible accordingly. At the same time the Bible (Gen. 17:15-18 KJV) asserts:

(...), but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: (...). And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

In the phrase '*give thee a son also of her*' the word '*also*' shows that Abraham already had a son and the '*promise of the Lord with Abraham*' had already been fulfilled in the birth of Ishmael through Hagar. The words '*of her* (Sarah)' show that after the promise having been already fulfilled; now Sarah will bear a son. Isaac's birth was not promised prior to the sacrifice of Ishmael. The Bible and the Qur'ān, agree that both Sarah and Abraham (pbAh) were neither waiting for the fulfillment of any promise nor expecting the birth of another son. They seemed to be fully contented with Ishmael and were not yearning for another child. *The good news about the birth of Isaac, therefore, took both of them by surprise.* God promised twelve princes as sons of Ishmael. This promise confirms the royal status of Ishmael and Hagar. Princes are born only to kings and queens. This promise of princes was not made with Isaac, Jacob or Esau. It was long after them that the descendants of Esau became kings in their respective lands. Similarly, about 600 years after the death of Jacob, Saul became the first king among the Israelites.

Chapter 24 is about the '*Prayers of Abraham for the Descendants of Hagar*'. The Bible is silent about any prayers made by Abraham. The Qur'ān, on the other hand, reveals the faith and tests and trials of

Abraham (pbAh) in detail. The Qur'ān also records certain prayers of Abraham in the background of Makkah, which pertained to his descendants there. The Bible has neither recorded any of Abraham's prayers in favor of the descendants of Isaac with the background in Canaan. Ishmael participated with his father, Abraham, in the covenant of circumcision, in raising the walls of the Ka'bah, in Hajj and Sa'y, in keeping the Ka'bah clean and purified from the abominations. Therefore most of Abraham's prayers related to Ishmael and his descendants at Makkah. The perfect fulfillment of those prayers is, therefore, the ineradicable proof for the acceptance of the prayers of Abraham about the Ka'bah, Makkah, his descendants through Hagar and Ishmael as follows: i) The grant of a gentle son ready to suffer and endure; ii) making them the leaders of humankind; iii) making Makkah the City of Peace; iv) feeding its people with fruits; v) Making the Ka'bah as the house of prayer; vi) Abraham's prayer for His Followers & Descendants, etc. The fulfillment of a prophecy or a promise can also be taken as the proof of its truth. As such, the fulfillment of all the prayers of Abraham in his descendants through Hagar affirms that these prayers pertained only to his descendants at Makkah. Obviously, no prayer of Abraham with regard to his progeny in Canaan is on the record.

Chapter-25 is regarding '*Abraham's Prayer for the Promised Messenger*'. The most important prayer of Abraham was regarding His messenger to be sent amongst the Ishmaelites living at Makkah, who might rehearse the signs of the Lord to them, and instruct them in scripture and wisdom to sanctify them. This was the most important of the prayers,

Abraham had ever made during his life. It was fulfilled completely in the person of prophet Muh□ammad (pbAh).

There are two appendices at the end of the book. **Appendix A** is: '*The Bible Perpetuates Oppression and Slavery*'; and **Appendix B** is: '*Interpolation in the Text*'.

## ABBREVIATIONS OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

### OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	Gen. or Gn	Exodus	Exod. or Ex
Leviticus	Lev. or Lv	Numbers	Num. or Nm
Deuteronomy	Deut. or Dt	Joshua	Josh. or Jo
Judges	Judg. or Jgs	Ruth	Ruth or Ru
1 Samuel	1 Sam. or 1 Sm	2 Samuel	2 Sam. or 2 Sm
1 Kings	1 Kings or 1 Kgs	2 Kings	2 Kings or 2 Kgs
1 Chronicles	1 Chron. or 1 Chr	2 Chronicles	2 Chron. or 2 Chr
Ezra	Ezra or Ezr	Nehemiah	Neh. or Neh
Esther	Esther or Est	Job	Job or Jb
Psalms	Ps. or Ps	Proverbs	Prov. or Prv
Ecclesiastes	Eccles. or Eccl	Song of Songs	Song of Sol. or Sg
Isaiah	Isa. or Is	Jeremiah	Jer. or Jer
Lamentations	Lam. or Lam	Ezekiel	Ezek or Ez
Daniel	Dan. or Dn	Hosea	Hosea or Hos
Joel	Joel or Jl	Amos	Amos or Am
Obadiah	Obad. or Ob	Jonah	Jon. or Jon
Micah	Mic. or Mi	Nahum	Nah. or Na
Habakkuk	Hab. Or Hb	Zephaniah	Zeph. or Zep
Haggai	Hag. or Hg	Zechariah	Zech. or Zec
Malachi	Mal. or Mal		

### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew	Matt. or Mt	Mark	Mark or k
Luke	Luke or Lk	John	John or Jn
Acts	Acts	Romans	Rom. or Rom
1 Corinthians	1 Cor. or 1 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Cor. or 2 Cor
Galatians	Gal. or Gal	Ephesians	Eph. or Eph
Philippians	Phil. or Phil	Colossians	Col. or Col
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess or 1 Thes	2 Thessalonians	2 Thess or 2 Thes
1 Timothy	1 Tim. or 1 Tim	2 Timothy	2 Tim. or 2 Tim
Titus	Titus or Ti	Philemon	Philem. or Phlm
Hebrews	Heb. or Heb	James	James or Jas
1 Peter	1 Pet. or 1 Pt	2 Peter	2 Pet. or 2 Pt
1 John	1 John or 1 Jn	2 John	2 John or 2 Jn
3 John	3 John or 3 Jn	Jude	Jude
Revelation <sup>16</sup>	Rev./Rv or Apoc.		

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<sup>16</sup> *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15<sup>th</sup> Edn., The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003, p, 578 ff, 15.51, 53.



## Chapter-1

# HAGAR: THE MOTHER OF ISHMAEL (PBAH) AND NOT A SLAVE GIRL OF SARAH

When Abraham's family entered Canaan, his first wife, Sarai<sup>17</sup> was 65 plus. She had no children by

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<sup>171717</sup> 'Sarai' was the original name given by her parents. When 'Abram' became of ninety nine years, God changed his name as 'Abraham' and said to him: '(...) but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee (Gen 17:5)'. At the same time God renamed 'Sarai' as 'Sarah' saying to Abraham: 'thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be (Gen 17:15).' 'Sarah' is the feminine of 'Sar'; which, according to *Strong's Dic. of the Words of the Heb. Bible* (p.121, entry 8269), means: 'a head person, a captain, chief, general, governor, keeper, lord, master, prince, ruler'.

*Chambers Biographical Dic.* (p.1633) states about 'Sarah':

Sarah, whose name means 'princess' in Hebrew, was the wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac. She accompanied Abraham from Ur to Canaan (Gen 12-23) and pretended to be Abraham's sister before Pharaoh in Egypt and Abimelech in Gerar, since her beauty and their desire for her might have endangered Abraham's life. Pharaoh took her as his wife, and Abraham prospered, but when the truth was revealed, Pharaoh banished them both. Long barren, she eventually gave birth to Isaac in her old age, fulfilling God's promise that she would be the ancestor of nations (Gen 17.16). She died at the age of 127 in Kiriath-arba.

This account of Sarah shows how shameful a character is

then. The family passed through Shechem, the Oak of Moreh, the mountainous district east of Bethel, the Negeb stage by stage. There was a severe famine in that country at the time. So they went down to Egypt to stay there for some time. It was then that the Pharaoh of Egypt offered his daughter, Hagar, to Abraham (pbAh). The Bible states:

And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite *was* then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the

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depicted of the great patriarch in the biblical literature.

Rev. Robert Hunter, in his *The Sunday School Teacher's Bible Manual* (London: Cassell & Co Ltd, 1894), p. 654, asserts:

**Sarah**, the name which Abraham's wife received by direction of God during the last years of her life, she having been called SARAI during her youth and middle age (Gen17:15). Abraham married her in Ur of the Chaldees (11:28-31). She was, he on one occasion said, the daughter of his father, but not of his mother (20:12). (...). Sarai, or Sarah, was ten years younger than Abraham (28:17). When Abraham departed with her out of Haran to go to Egypt, he was seventy-five and she sixty-five years old (12:4; 17:17). (...) gave birth to the child of promise, whom she named Isaac. She was then ninety years old, and Abraham one hundred.

It means that at the time of the so called event of the kings of Egypt/Gerar she was not less than sixty five years. It is not likely that she could be so attractive at that advanced age that the kings might show their yearning desire for her so fondly.

south. And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine *was* grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou *art* a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This *is* his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she *was* very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.<sup>18</sup>

In her disappointment to get any child in future, Sarah offered her handmaid, Hagar<sup>19</sup>, to Abraham (pbAh) to be his wife<sup>20</sup>, in the hope that she might have a child for herself through Hagar.<sup>21</sup> So Hagar

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<sup>18</sup> Gen 12:6-16.

<sup>19</sup> Hagar was Abraham's wife and Ishmael's mother. Both of them were settled in the wilderness of Paran (Makkah) by Abraham, as God had told him. Subsequently the Ka'bah was built here.

'A divine messenger came to Hagar's aid, when she had run out of water, and assured her that Ishmael would become a great nation.' (*Chambers Biographical Dic.*, ed. Melanie Parry, NY: Chambers Harrap Publ., 1999, 811).

<sup>20</sup> *The Soncino Chumash* has recorded a footnote which asserts that Hagar was Abraham's wife; not a concubine:

To be his wife. Not his concubine (N [i.e. Rabbi Mosheh ben Nachman]), p, 76.

Pl. see Ch. 11 of this book for detailed study of the theme.



was given to Abraham to be his wife. Hagar, in due course, became pregnant and according to the Gen, she despised Sarai.<sup>22</sup> Then Sarai said to Abraham, 'It's your fault that Hagar despises me.'<sup>23</sup> Subsequently, after having freehand from Abraham to deal with Hagar, 'Sarai treated Hagar so cruelly that she ran away.'<sup>24</sup> Then an angel of The Lord met Hagar and said:

'Go back to her [Sarai] *and be her slave*' [stress added]. (...) 'I will give you so many descendants that no one will be able to count them. You are going to have a son and you will name him Ishmael, because the Lord has heard your cry of distress. (...).' Hagar bore Abram a son, and he named him Ishmael. Abram was 86 years at the time.<sup>25</sup>

This innocent looking assertion ascribed to the angel commanding Hagar to '*Go back to her (Sarai) and be her slave*'<sup>26</sup> seems to be some interpolation. Here is an analysis of the contents to understanding the theme:

According to Gen 16:4: 'and when she [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress [Sarah] was despised in her eyes.' As a result Sarah treated her harshly which made her run away.

Hagar despises Sarai, her mistress. The alleged running away of Hagar, the slave girl, from her mistress was perhaps the most serious allegation of

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<sup>21</sup> Gen. 16:2-3 KJV.

<sup>22</sup> Gen. 16:4 KJV.

<sup>23</sup> Gen. 16:5 KJV.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. 16:6 KJV.

<sup>25</sup> Gen. 16:9-11; 15-16 GNB.

<sup>26</sup> According to KJV: 'return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.'

the time. It is important to note that an angel of the Lord enters into the scene to tell the absconder to go back to Sarai and be her slave. It seems to put one's own wish and words deftly in the angel's mouth to get the slavery of Hagar authenticated by the Lord. As a matter of fact, the angel's advice to Hagar '*to be a slave to Sarai*' had been introduced to establish superiority of Israel over the Ishmaelites. The ascription of slavery to Hagar has not been substantiated by any independent evidence in the history of the region. We, therefore, feel that the narrative reproduced below is not the divine writ but a self-concocted story of the Israelites:

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.<sup>27</sup> And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong *be* upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee<sup>28</sup>. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she

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<sup>27</sup> It categorically indicates that Hagar was a lawful wife of Abraham properly wedded to him; and not a slave girl of Sarai, when she gave birth to Ishmael.

<sup>28</sup> It is not like a gentleman to surrender his wife, who is

fled from her face. And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.<sup>29</sup>

As to the attribution of Hagar with the 'handmaid' or 'slave girl' of Sarai the following points are to be considered objectively:

- (1) There is no evidence of any nature that Sarai had inherited Hagar from her parents.
- (2) Hagar was not with Abraham (pbAh) and Sarai when they left Haran for Canaan.

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going to be the mother of his only and first born son, to her rival, who is determined to subject her to harsh treatment. Hagar was his lawfully wedded wife; and he was, by all canons of law, justice, and equity required to safeguard and protect her from all kinds of impending troubles. On the contrary, quite indifferently and irresponsibly, Abraham says to Sarah: 'Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee.' How can one conceive that a just and righteous person of Abraham's stature could throw his wife to be ruthlessly maltreated by her rival!

<sup>29</sup> Gen. 16:1-12 KJV.

(3) The Bible does not indicate how Sarai became the mistress of Hagar. There is no mention of Sarai having any personal and independent source of income of her own with which she could have purchased Hagar.

(4) There is also no mention of Hagar among the female servants claimed to having been given by the king of Egypt to Abraham (pbAh).

(5) It is generally claimed that Hagar was a slave girl and Pharaoh had presented her to Sarai. The encounter of Sarai and Abraham (pbAh) with Pharaoh has been recorded in the Bible as follows:

And he [Pharaoh] entreated Abram well for her [Sarai's] sake: and *he had* [stress added] sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maid-servants, and she asses, and camels.<sup>30</sup>

The verse says 'he had sheep', etc. the Hebrew word used here for 'had'<sup>31</sup>, is 'הָיָה' (h+y+h='hayah'), which, by no means, signifies 'given, or gifted, or presented'. The verse 5 above tells us that Abraham (pbAh) had brought a lot of his movable property 'and the souls that they had gotten'<sup>32</sup> with him, including

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<sup>30</sup> Gen. 12:16 KJV.

<sup>31</sup> J. Strong, *A Concise Dic. Of the Words in the Heb. Bible* (NY: the Methodist Book Concern, 1984), entry 1961, p.32, explains the word as: 'a prim. Root [comp. 1933, (which means: to be, i.e. exist, to have)] to pertain, happen'.

<sup>32</sup> The word 'gotten' here means: 'made, brought forth, had the charge of, gathered, got, kept, maintained, procured, used.' (see *Strong's Dic*, p.92, entry 6213), which clearly means that Abraham had already got and owned these souls (men, women, slaves, sheep, etc.) that he procured and gathered before coming to Canaan.

male and female servants/slaves (in Bible the word is 'souls', which applies to slaves, servants, sheep, etc), that he had gathered in Haran.<sup>33</sup> In view of the construction of the verse the word 'had' can easily refer to these holdings. It shows that he was a wealthy person having proper dignity, and status; and not a needy or poor person. But even if it be taken to mean 'was given', it refers to Abraham; and whatsoever was given by Pharaoh, was the property of Abraham (pbAh), and not the property of Sarai.

(6) It be also noted that whatever be claimed to be given to Abraham, there is no mention of Hagar in it, which shows that Hagar was not the part of the lot given to him as a possession or property. She would have been given in some other status.

(7) A similar story has been recorded in Gen 20. It relates to Abi Melech of Gerar in lieu of Pharaoh of Egypt. It says:

And Abi Melech took sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave them unto Abraham and restored him Sarah his wife.<sup>34</sup>

Irrespective of the fact that such shameful transaction is obviously unbecoming of Abraham (pbAh), all the items were presented to Abraham (pbAh) and not to Sarah. It is conspicuous to note that Hagar is absent

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<sup>33</sup> It is recorded in the Bible (Gen. 12:4,5 KJV) as follows:

So Abram departed, (...) was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan;

<sup>34</sup> Gen. 20:14 KJV.

from the gifts here as well.

It can be appreciated that the verse does not mention Hagar among the slaves. It also shows that Abraham was the sole owner of every thing given by the king to him, while Sarah did not own any thing independently except through Abraham (pbAh). As such, even if Hagar be one of the woman-slaves given by the king to Abraham (pbAh), she would be the slave of Abraham, and not of Sarah. While commenting on the incident of Abimelech with Sarah, it has been said:

And along with valuable gifts, the king (Abimelech) gave Abraham a thousand pieces of silver in Sarah's behalf *since a woman in that culture could not receive or hold property* [stress added].<sup>35</sup>

It be also borne in mind that Sarah herself did not possess anything when she reportedly demanded the expulsion of Hagar along with Ishmael (pbAh). She had to request Abraham (pbAh) to expel them so that Ishmael might be deprived of his lawful inheritance from Abraham (pbAh). It be also noted that the expulsion of Ishmael was carried out to depriving him of his lawfully deserved inheritance.<sup>36</sup>

Since God Himself certifies Ishmael as the son of Abraham (pbAh) and he was admittedly the first-born of Abraham (pbAh), therefore, he was entitled to a double share from the inheritance of Abraham (pbAh)

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<sup>35</sup> *Discovering Genesis* (NY: The Guideposts Home Bible Study Program, 1987), p. 154.

<sup>36</sup> Even the son of a person from a slave girl cannot be denied the right to inheritance. *Collins Gem Dic of the Bible*, 1974, p.75 asserts:

There was nothing to prevent one born to the master by a slave girl from inheriting even the birthright.

as compared with Isaac. It seems that the divine act of making Ishmael, the first-born of Abraham (pbAh) and God's repeated affirmation that Ishmael was the son of Abraham was distasteful to the Israelites. Hence they refused to submit before the will of the Lord. To assert their own supremacy, they planned to show Ishmael from inferior stock just by fabricating baseless attribution of slavery against Hagar and Ishmael. On the contrary history shows that God amply fulfilled His promise with the descendants of Hagar.

Hagar was a princess of the royal house of Pharaohs in Egypt. She was the mother of Ishmael, the first-born of Abraham while Isaac was the second son of Abraham born by Sarah when Ishmael was already 14 years old.<sup>37</sup> Ample evidence has been recorded in this work to show that Hagar was a princess, being the daughter of the king of Egypt.

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<sup>37</sup> Gen. 16:16; 21:5 KJV.

## WEANING OF ISAAC (PBAH); HAGAR AND ISHMAEL (PBAH) SENT AWAY

When Isaac (pbAh) was born Abraham (pbAh) was 100 years old and Sarah was 90. He circumcised Isaac on the eighth day and the child grew up. Isaac was weaned between the age of 5 to 7 years and Abraham (pbAh) arranged a great feast at this occasion. It is narrated in the Bible as follows:

And Sara saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.<sup>38</sup>

The word 'mocking' has been rendered as 'playing' in the *Revised Standard Version*:

But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian whom she had born to Abraham, *playing* with her son Isaac.<sup>39</sup>

RSV writes in the footnote: 'Gk. Vg. Heb. lacks "*with her son Isaac*".<sup>40</sup> This means that Sarah only saw Ishmael playing alone and not playing with or

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<sup>38</sup> Gen. 21:10 KJV.

<sup>39</sup> Gen. 21:10 RSV. p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> RSV, Footnote 'h' on Gen. 21:10, p. 16.



mocking at Isaac. The GNB states as under:

One day Ishmael, whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, was *Playing* with<sup>41</sup> Sarah's son Isaac.<sup>42</sup>

The Bible is replete with such differences of words and meanings.<sup>43</sup> Which one of the versions is correct, cannot, therefore, be ascertained?

Verse 21:10 tells us that Sara demanded of Abraham (pbAh) to cast out the bondwoman and her son Ishmael as he shall not be heir with her son, Isaac. Abraham, though troubled very much on this demand, had to cast out both Hagar and Ishmael, reportedly on receiving divine commandment as under:

Do whatever Sara tells you, because it is through Isaac that you will have the descendants I have promised.<sup>44</sup>

This verse implies that God had no concern for moral values such as social justice, equity or filial love and compassion. God was, perhaps, the tribal God of the Israelites, therefore, He was under compulsion to show partiality towards the ancestors of the Israelites. The God of the Israelites, therefore, was not obliged to take care of Hagar or Ishmael. The story contained in Gen. 21:1-21, therefore, requires in-depth study to grasp the basic theme introduced vide Gen. 17:19:

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<sup>41</sup> GNB (HARPERCOLLINS, 1997, p.21) adds a footnote here: 'playing with; or making fun of.'

<sup>42</sup> Gen. 21:9 GNB. It be noted that the GNB adds a footnote here: '*Some ancient translations with Sarah's son Isaac; Hebrew does not have these words.*'

<sup>43</sup> The theme has been discussed in Appendix B: 'Interpolation in the Text' at the end of the book.

<sup>44</sup> Gen.21:12 GNB.

I will bless her, and I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will become the mother of nations, and there will be kings among her descendants.<sup>45</sup>

But God said, 'No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will name him Isaac. I will keep my covenant with him and with his descendants forever. It is an everlasting covenant. (...).'<sup>46</sup>

There are reasons to believe that Gen.17:19 quoted above and most of the verses of Gen. 21:1-21 reflect an obvious distortion in the text and are, perhaps, a product of later periods starting from the reign of King Solomon and extending up to the third century B.C. The purpose behind these interpolations and distortions was firstly, to propagate the superiority of Israeli race over the contesting nations such as Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammonites, Amorites, Edomites and others. Secondly, such changes were effected to invoke blessings of Abraham along with divine support to establish exclusive right of Israel for inheritance and permanent possession of the so-called Promised Land, as discussed earlier. We shall, therefore, review the biblical narrative about Hagar and Ishmael, as compared with Sarah and Isaac, in the background of Gen 16:1-12 cited above along with Gen. 21 given below:

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, *mocking*. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very

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<sup>45</sup> Gen. 17-16 GNB.

<sup>46</sup> Gen.17-19 GNB.

grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away<sup>47</sup>: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.<sup>48</sup>

From this excerpt it becomes clear that the weaning

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<sup>47</sup> This narrative is a perverted report of facts. Ishmael was a well built youth of about 19 years (according to the calculations of the Biblical data) who could not be put on the shoulders of Hagar like a suckling infant. She can hardly be expected even to carry bread and bottle of water along with a child (M. Ashraf Cheenah, author).

<sup>48</sup> Gen. 21:9-21 KJV.

ceremony of Isaac took place when he was about 5 years<sup>49</sup>, while Ishmael (pbAh) by that time was of about 19 years.<sup>50</sup> This was the time when we find an

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<sup>49</sup> Commenting on Ishmael's weaning it has been asserted by *Works of Philo*, tr. C. D. Yonge, The Ages Software Albany, OR USA, Version 1.0 ©1999, 1:523:

And yet before Ishmael was born and circumcised thirteen ears before the birth of Isaac and having been now weaned of more than seven years, he was banished with his mother, because he being illegitimate was mocking the legitimate son as though he were on terms of equality with him.

<sup>50</sup> *Aids to Understanding Bible* (NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1971), p. 702, s.v. 'Hagar' records:

Years later when Abraham prepared 'a big feast on the day of Isaac's being weaned' at the age of about five years, Sarah noted Hagar's son Ishmael now about 19 years old 'Poking Fun' or playing with Isaac in a mocking way.

*Aids to Understanding Bible*, p. 830, 'Inheritance' writes:

Ishmael as Abraham's oldest son was prospective heir for about fourteen years. But at Sara's request and with jealous approval, Abraham dismissed Ishmael, then about nineteen years of age.

*All Scripture is Inspired of God & Beneficial* (NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 1963), p. 16 writes:

God protects Sarah from contamination by Abimelech of the Philistines. The promised heir Isaac is born when Abraham is a hundred years old and Sarah about ninety. Some five years after this the nineteen-year-old Ishmael pokes fun at Isaac, the heir, resulting in the dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael, with God's approval.

Dr. John Gill (1690-1771), commenting on Gen 21:8, writes in his *Exposition of the Entire Bible*:

**And the child grew, and was weaned**, (...). He throve under the nursing of its mother, and through the blessing of God upon him; and being healthy and robust, and capable of digesting stronger food, and living upon it, he was weaned from the breast: at what age Isaac was when weaned is not certain, there being no fixed time for such an

affair, but it was at the discretion of parents, and as they liked it, and the case of their children required; and in those times, when men lived to a greater age than now, they might not be weaned so early, as we find their marrying and begetting children were when they were more advanced in years. The Jewish writers are not agreed about this matter. Jarchi and Ben Melech say that Isaac was weaned twenty four months after his birth; a chronologer of theirs says (q) it was in the hundred and third year of Abraham, that is, when Isaac was three years old, which agrees with the Apocrypha: 'But she bowing herself toward him, laughing [at] the cruel tyrant to scorn, spake in her country language on this manner; 'O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee such three years, and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age, and endured the troubles of education.' (2 Maccabees 7:27). According to Jerome (r), it was the opinion of some of the Hebrews that he was five years old; and at this age Bishop Usher (s) places the weaning of him; for to make him ten or twelve years of age, as some of the Rabbins do (t), when this was done, is very unlikely. Philo the Jew (u) makes him to be seven years of age at this time:

The same J. Gill, commenting on 1Sa 1:22, writes:

for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned: which, according to Jarchi, was at the end of twenty two months; but others say at the end of twenty four months, or two years, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; and sometimes a child was three years old before it was weaned, and sometimes longer, which very probably was the case here; See Gill on [Gen 21:8](#). Comestor (d) observes, there was a three fold weaning of children in old times; the first from their mother's milk, when three years old; the second from their tender age, and care of a dry nurse, when seven years old; the third from childish manners, when at twelve years of age; and that it is this last and metaphorical weaning which is here meant, when Samuel was twelve years of age, and fit to serve in the temple; but the proper sense is best, since she is said to bring him when weaned: her reason for it seems to be this, because had she went up with her sucking child, she must have brought him back again, since he would not be fit to

abrupt change in the cordial relationship among the members of the Abraham's family.

It becomes obvious that Sarah's demand to cast out Hagar and Ishmael was not prompted either by Ishmael's playing with or mocking at Isaac. It was rather made due to envious attitude of Sarah against Hagar and Ishmael. The real motive behind her demand for expulsion was to deprive Ishmael, the first-born of Abraham, of his rightful inheritance from his father, and to make Isaac the only inheritor of all the wealth, the blessings, and the land promised by the Lord to the descendants of Abraham, as can be appreciated from Sarah's words:

Wherefore she [Sarah] said unto Abraham, *Cast out*

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be left behind, and would be entirely incapable of any kind of service in the sanctuary; and according to the nature of her vow, she could not think of bringing him back again, after she had once entered him there:

John Gill (1690-1771), commenting on 1Sa 1:24, writes:

**And when she had weaned him,** (...). At the usual time of weaning children; See Gill on [1Sa 1:23](#) some refer this not only to the milk of the breast, from which he was weaned, but to such food as was common to children, and so supposes him grown up to nine or ten years of age:

Matthew Henry (1662-1714)'s *Com. On the Whole Bible*:

IV. The solemn entering of this child into the service of the sanctuary. We may take it for granted that he was presented to the Lord at forty days old, as all the first-born were ([Luk 2:22](#), 23): but this is not mentioned, because there was nothing in it singular; but now that he was weaned he was presented, not to be redeemed. Some think it was as soon as he was weaned from the breast, which, the Jews say, was not till he was three years old; it is said she gave him suck till she had weaned him, [1Sa 1:23](#). Others think it was not till he was weaned from childish things, at eight or ten years old.

*this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.*<sup>51</sup>

It is pertinent to note here that the writers of the Genesis have portrayed *Hagar as the slave of Sarai, which looks to be an obvious distortion of the facts*. The theme will be discussed in detail at a later stage. According to Gen 16:1-10 Sarai had given Hagar to Abraham (pbAh) as a wife with the purpose of obtaining children from her. Reportedly Hagar started despising Sarah after the conception of the child which infuriated her and she started to treat Hagar harshly. Due to the callous treatment of Sarah, Hagar fled from her face<sup>52</sup>. Later on an angel of the Lord found Hagar by a fountain of water in the wilderness and told her to go back to Sarah and be her slave. The Angel, however, takes no notice of the alleged cruel treatment of Sarah with Hagar. As no admonition has been given to Sarah, therefore, it implies that she had divine sanction for cruel treatment with the slave girl.

It is strange to note that the angel, instead of calling Hagar by name, chose to address her with debasing remarks i.e. 'Hagar Sarai's maid'<sup>53</sup>. It seems that the angel knew full well that Hagar was the maid of Sarai, but he did not know, from where she came and whither was she going. Anyhow, even after knowing the sad plight of Hagar, the angel paid no attention to the actual affliction of Hagar, and instead of admonishing

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<sup>51</sup> Gen. 21:10 KJV.

<sup>52</sup> Gen. 16:7 KJV.

<sup>53</sup> Gen: 16:8 KJV.

Sarah for her cruelty; the angel exhorted Hagar to return to her mistress and to submit herself to the hands of Sarah. Even earlier to that, Abraham (pbAh) had been reported as having said to Sarah: 'Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee<sup>54</sup>'. We, therefore, have reasons to believe that the biased assertions serving only the cause of Israel cannot be treated from God who is just and merciful towards all His creatures in the universe. Such writings can, therefore, be considered to be only the handiwork of some so called pious scribe of Israel who injected their own prejudice into the Holy Book so that the same might be taken as the words of Abraham (pbAh) or a commandment from the Lord.

Standards of morality differ from nation to nation and man to man in the Bible. God, however, has no varying standards of justice simply because '*Word of God endures forever*'. God is just and He cannot be supposed to side with anyone without genuine justification. In the instant case, Lord's advice to Hagar to be a slave of Sarah is *against the canons of natural justice and equity*. All human beings had Adam (pbAh) and Eve as their common ancestors which envisages universal brotherhood of man on earth. God did not divide His people between slaves and masters. God says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا  
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ.<sup>55</sup>

O mankind! We created you from a [single pair] of a male and a female, and made you into nations and

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<sup>54</sup> Gen. 16:6 KJV.

<sup>55</sup> (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Hajjūrāt 49.13.



tribes, that ye may know each other [not that ye may despise each other]. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is [he who is] the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted [with all things].

Hence, all the people born of a single pair and the same substance cannot claim any birth rights better than others.

All human beings are, therefore, equal and free by the natural order of their creation. It is human beings who are the authors of slavery and exploitation of man in contravention of the Law of the Lord. We, therefore, cannot assume that God has blood relations with any race or he can show partiality towards anyone at the cost of others. This ought to be so because each and every human being is a creation of the same God.

The direction of the angel to a bondswoman to submit to the hands of her ruthless mistress, as recorded in the Bible, depicts God as a tribal chief of the Israelites, who openly sides with the oppressor without showing any compassion towards the oppressed. This seems to be the first instance where God approves cruel treatment with slaves. The above mentioned words of Abraham and the so called commandments of the Lord contravene and violate the divine principles of justice, equality of humankind and human rights for slaves. Such assertions in the Bible assign unlimited and absolute powers to the masters to exercise any cruel treatment towards their slaves.

SO CALLED AFFLICTION OF HAGAR  
AND  
DISTRESS OF ABRAHAM (pBAH) AND SARAH

Prior to her marriage with Abraham (pBAh), Hagar had no grief, worry, or distress for not having a child, because she was of a young age, rather still a girl; and she was not barren either. Moreover, she was still unmarried. So she had no cause of worry in this respect. Even afterwards there seems to be no trace of any of her such affliction, because she conceived immediately after her marriage with Abraham (pBAh). Obviously there was no urgent need of her yearning for a child. On the other hand Abraham (pBAh) was childless at the age of 75 at Haran, when God commanded him to go to another land telling him:

Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred<sup>56</sup>,

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<sup>56</sup> It may be noted here that Haran was neither the mother land of Abraham (pBAh) nor had he any of his kindred there except his father, who had already died before Abraham (pBAh) left Haran (Acts 7:2-4). Contradiction between Acts 7:2-4 and Gen. 11:31-32 (And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.) and 12:1-2 is noteworthy.

and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.<sup>57</sup>

God told Abraham (pbAh) in a vision:

Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD, *what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless* [stress added], and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he *that shall come forth out of thine own bowels* [stress added] shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. *And he believed in the LORD* [stress added]; and he counted it to him for righteousness.<sup>58</sup>

An analytic study has been afforded hereunder on the above verses:

In 15:1 God consoles Abraham (pbAh) saying, 'I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.' Abraham (pbAh) does not agree to it, and in a complaining tone declares it to be incredible and rejects it saying: 'What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?.' And Abram said, 'Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.'

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<sup>57</sup> Gen. 12:1-2 KJV.

<sup>58</sup> Gen. 15:1-6 KJV.

This kind of aggressive complaint is unbecoming on behalf of a person of Abraham's caliber, who stood patient, persevering, and obedient to the Lord in all tests, trials and temptations of time. Moreover, Abraham (pbAh) was an Apostle of Allah and was to become the '*Leader for the whole humanity*' (للناس إماماً) and it was unbecoming to a person of that status to worry about his mean, mundane, and material inheritance. His real inheritance was the word of guidance from Almighty God, and Eliezer was an honest, efficient, and provenly befitting person for the requisite task and undertaking. Then he was 'born in his house' and had been equally beloved and dependable to Abraham (pbAh).

In 15:4 God says, 'This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.' It means that (i) the inheritance pertains to that 'That shall come forth out of thine [Abraham's] *own bowels*'; and has nothing to do with the womb of any this or that woman. (ii) This great good news includes the promise of Abraham (pbAh)'s inheritance and this promised son shall, without any shadow of doubt or defect, be his heir, successor, and inheritor in every sense of the word. Every impartial and unprejudiced person shall take Ishmael (pbAh) as the open, clear-cut, and implicit confirmatory and the substantial fulfillment of God's above mentioned promise to Abraham (pbAh); and no sensible and impartial person would even consider the far fetched name of Isaac (pbAh) for its fulfillment.

Gen. 15:5 tells that the number of Abraham's seed from that son; who, obviously, will be, and could,

naturally, have been, only his first born son, Ishmael (pbAh); *would be great*. This episode comes to its end with 15:5; and the next 15:6 is a kind of observation to it. It says that Abraham (pbAh) believed in the Lord and showed no shadow of doubt in it. This is the real response and behaviour becoming to the patriarch Abraham (pbAh). The verse further observes that God Almighty also counted it as a proof of Abraham (pbAh)'s righteousness due to his unconditional, absolute, and doubtless faith on the spot.

But how could the Israelite redactor absorb, tolerate, and digest this privilege of someone other than his own progenitor, Isaac. So he interpolated v. 7 to apply the promise of worldly possession of this land to Israel and to inherit it.

Then comes v. 8, which is quite unbecoming to the faith of the great patriarch. He says, as if he does not have faith in God's word, 'Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it.' It shows that: (i) He was doubtful about the word of God. (ii) His main concern was not at all about the propagation of faith, and the right path of God, and the righteousness; and he was concerned only with the mean, mundane, and material worldly gains like sheep, goats, cattle, slaves, and land etc. what assurance could have satisfied him when he rejects the word and promise of God declared by Him in unequivocal and clear terms.

While introducing Chapter 16, *The Chumash* asserts regarding the birth of Ishmael (pbAh):

Despite their spiritual riches and Godly assurances, Abraham and Sarah were still heartbroken at their

barrenness, for without heirs they would not be able to continue the mission of bringing God's teachings to mankind. Recognizing that it was she who was infertile, Sarah suggested that Abraham marry her maidservant Hagar, and, if a son were born, Sarah would raise him, so that he would be considered her adopted child.<sup>59</sup>

It makes clear that it were Abraham and Sarah who were '*distressed*' at not having a son; and '*not having a son*' was by no means Hagar's '*affliction*'. '*Having a son*', rather became a cause of affliction for Hagar.

As to the 'Affliction of Hagar' the Bible says:

(...) Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction].<sup>60</sup>

What does Hagar's affliction mean? By all means it was her persecution by Sarah. It was the pregnancy of Hagar which had aroused the jealousy of Sarah

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<sup>59</sup> *The Chumash*, 2007, p. 71, Introduction to Chapter 16.

<sup>60</sup> Gen 16:6-11 KJV.

against her. The angel either fails to understand the plight of Hagar or declines to provide any relief to her. In these circumstances, the good news pertaining to the conception and birth of the child, (Gen. 16:11) brought no relief to Hagar. As against this Hagar's afflictions were aggravated after the birth of Ishmael (pbAh) because Sarah allegedly demanded Abraham (pbAh) to cast out Hagar along with the child so that Isaac (pbAh) might become the sole inheritor to the entire wealth of Abraham (pbAh). God, therefore, did not hear the affliction of Hagar as asserted in Gen. 16:11. Instead of providing any relief to Hagar, the Lord commanded her to go back to Sarah and continue suffering from her persecution obediently. This behaviour can be expected only from some weak and helpless well wisher, who has no courage or power to help the oppressed person, and, rather, advises him to bear the atrocities patiently. The situation demanded the admonition to the allegedly enraged, jealous, and cruel Sarah and provision of relief to the poor, helpless, and maltreated Hagar. But contrary to it the angel or the Lord, like some helpless and powerless person, advises Hagar to have patience. Ghālib<sup>61</sup> has well portrayed the situation:

Yih kahān kī doestī hay; kih banae hayn dost  
nās□ih□!

Koe'ī chārah sāz hoetā! koe'ī ghamgusār hoetā!

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<sup>61</sup> Mirzā Asadullah Khān Ghālib of Delhi. One of the greatest Urdu poets of India. He was also renowned for his Persian prose and poetry. (1798-1869). His master piece is *Dīwān-e- Ghālib*.

What kind of sympathy it is that the friends have become advisers!

would that there had been some rescuer; or someone who would share my worries and distresses!

But God paid no attention to the affliction of Hagar. Neither He extended any relief to her, nor afforded any protection. He rather encouraged the cruel and unjust oppressor, although He Himself had commanded at another place:

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: He shall dwell with thee, *even* among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.<sup>62</sup>

But in the instant case God sided with Sarah by directing Hagar to serve under her. Now, when the Lord Himself sets an example to contravene His own law, how could He enforce the same on the humankind? It can thus be appreciated that the angel's or God's command exhorting Hagar to go back and to submit to the hands of her mistress, contradicts His law. The commandment is also incompatible with the superlative attributes of justice, providence, and compassion of the Lord quoted hereunder:

For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and

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<sup>62</sup> Deu 23:15-16 KJV.



raiment.<sup>63</sup>

*'regardeth not persons'* has been rendered as *'He has no favourites'* in the *New American Bible* and *'He does not show partiality'* in the *Good News Bible*. In spite of all this, Hagar was directed to submit to the hands of Sarai because it serves the prejudicial purpose of Israel to make the Ishmaelites submit to the hands of the Israelites.

Is it possible that God, *'which regardeth not persons'*, could have passed these prejudicial orders to Hagar to approve, and resultantly allow to continue the oppressive treatment of Sarah towards the helplessly oppressed Hagar? It can thus be appreciated that the affliction of Hagar was nothing other than the so called maltreatment and oppression unleashed against Hagar at the hands of Sarah.

But a Muslim can never conceive that the noble and pious Sarah could have extended such a ruthless treatment towards Hagar, who had been serving her wholeheartedly for a long time, and who was being morally guided and trained by the most righteous pair of Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah of the time.

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<sup>63</sup> Deu 10:17-18 KJV.

## GOD'S PROMISES AND BLESSINGS FOR ABRAHAM (PBAH)

The Bible has recorded various promises and blessings of the Lord on Abraham (pbAh). It is worthwhile here to examine the fulfillment and application of the same.

### *1) Promise to make a great nation:*

Abraham (pbAh) was at Haran when the Lord called him to go to Canaan with the promise that 'I will make of thee a great nation' (Gen. 12:2). The promise has been repeated to Abraham (pbAh) in the following:

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him<sup>64</sup>, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall

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<sup>64</sup> It be noted here that the act of blessing has already been accomplished by the Lord (the use of perfect tense), and does not remain to be fulfilled at some later stage. The rest of the promises (making fruitful; multiplying exceedingly; birth of 12 princes; and making a great nation) were, obviously, yet to be accomplished by that time. And history confirms that all of them were literally accomplished in due course of time.

he beget, and I will make him a great<sup>65</sup> nation<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> Ishmael (pbAh) and Hagar family consisted of only two persons. Man power, at that time, was very important. The Qur'ān says that he was a 'ḥālim' youth, which means 'sagacious, mature, and enduring'. Lane's *Arabic- Eng. Lexicon* (Cambridge, 1984) explains:

Having ḥālim [i.e. endurance, or clemency, etc; enduring, or clement, etc.]. 'الحليم' is one of the names of God; meaning [...] He Whom the disobedience of the disobedient does not flurry [agitate] nor anger against them disquiet. (1:633). 'حَلِمَ' = he was, or became, moderate, gentle, deliberate, (...), patient (as meaning contr. of hasty), grave, staid (of sober and quiet character), sedate, or calm; and intelligent: or he managed his soul and temper on the occasions of excitement of anger (Tāj al-'Urūs). (....); became fat and compact; said of a child. (1: 632).

Hans Vehr explains it as below:

'حلم' = gentleness, patience, insight, understanding, intelligence, reason, to attain puberty. of sober and quiet character.

The Qur'ān has used 'أَحْلَامُهُمْ' in al-Tū̃r 52:32 in the sense of 'عقولهم' (their intellect, minds) as explained by *al-Jalālayn*. In Hūd 11:87, it has been used as 'لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ الرَّشِيدُ', where it obviously means 'wise'. Dar al-Choura, Lebanon, like almost all others, translates it: 'you are the wise and gracious man!' (p.163).

It can thus be concluded that 'حليم' would mean:

*Who attains puberty at early age; who managed his soul and temper on the occasions of excitement of anger, fat and compact; of sober and quiet character, calm and intelligent; deliberate.*

There was no problem for him to get a wife, as the tribe of Jurham had already settled there in the vicinity of the Ka'bah. His mother, Hagar, would have decided to marry him at very early age to develop a family, for which, *being fat and compact; and attaining puberty at early age*, was absolutely fit. So, obviously, Ishmael (pbAh) would have been married by the age of twenty, while his younger

brother, Isaac (pbAh), would have been a young boy of less than five or six years.

When forty years old he married Rabekah his cousin, by whom, when he was sixty, he had two sons, Esau and Jacob (pbAh). (W. Smith, *A Dic. of the B*, 1967, p. 267, s.v. 'Isaac').

It means that Ishmael (pbAh) was about 75 years old when Jacob (pbAh) was born. According to Gen. 46:27 KJV:

All the souls of the house of Jacob (pbAh), which came into Egypt, were three score and ten (70). And the days of Isaac (pbAh) were an hundred and fourscore years (180).

It shows that when Isaac (pbAh) died, Ishmael might have been 194 years old, had he been living by that time. It means that the offspring of Ishmael (pbAh) was of more than two hundred years when the offspring of Isaac (pbAh) entered Egypt, and their total number was only 70. The offspring of Ishmael (pbAh) would have reached to many thousand by that time and the phrase 'great nation' aptly applies to them. Now it is unto the reader to judge to which branch of Abraham (pbAh) the title of 'great nation' fitly applies. It would not be out of place to mention that the line of Ishmael (pbAh) was so fertile that Hagar, mother of Ishmael (pbAh), became 'with child' immediately after her marriage with Abraham (pbAh); whereas Sarah was barren and fruitless unto the age of ninety when she conceived a child miraculously due to the special grace of God (Gen. 17:17 KJV).

Then there is another aspect of the story. The offspring of Ishmael (pbAh) flourished and 'multiplied' to such an extent that they became the masters of the trade routes through Yemen and Egypt whereas the Israelites had to go begging food for the family to Egypt. So much so that they even became the 'brother sellers' for Joseph (pbAh). Even subsequently the Israelites remained enslaved in Egypt for about three centuries while the Ishmaelites continued to enjoy sovereignty throughout the vast expanse of Arabia.

Then history bears witness that the line of Ishmael (pbAh) flourished as an independent nation and had never been subjugated by any other nation. On the other hand the

The same promise has been reaffirmed to Hagar

Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand;  
for I will make him a great nation.

This shows, as stated in the footnotes above, that the promise of making a great nation was fulfilled in Ishmael (pbAh) and his descendants and not in the Israelites.

God bestowed His great favour on the Israelites by delivering them from the humble and ignoble slavery under the Egyptians. Through His mighty works in Egypt and at the sea, He made the Egyptians drown and sustained the Israelites in the wilderness. It was a great favour from the Lord that He raised hundreds of prophets to guide this nation. God's covenant with Israel was, therefore, one of the most sanctifying events in the history of the humankind. In the Holy Qur'ān Allah Subhānahu wa ta'ālā addressed the Israelites in the following words:

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ

Israelites had to bear the shame and disgrace of slavery at the hands of the Egyptians for hundreds of years. After Exodus, it was only for a single century that they could be able to enjoy freedom under the United kingdom of a limited piece of the land of Palestine. After that they cannot be treated as a fully sovereign nation. They suffered plunder, defeat and massacre at the hands of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, etc. from time to time. This cannot be treated an honourable fulfilment of any promise; whereas their brethren Ishmaelites enjoyed full liberty and respect by all the tribes of Arabia without any break.

<sup>66</sup> Gen 17:20 KJV.

فَارْهَبُونِ . وَأَمْنُوا بِمَا أَنزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَإِيَّايَ فَاتَّقُونِ . وَلَا تَلْسِنُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ . وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ . أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ . وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ . الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ . يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ . وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ . وَإِذْ بَخَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَدْبَحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ . وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>40</sup>O Children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with Me; and I would fulfil My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me. <sup>41</sup>And believe in what I have revealed, verifying what ye have got, and be not the first to disbelieve in it, and do not barter My Signs for a little [trivial] price; and me [alone] do ye fear.<sup>68</sup> <sup>42</sup>*And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth [whatever it be] when ye know*<sup>69</sup> [stress added]. <sup>43</sup>And be steadfast in

<sup>67</sup> Al- Qur'ān, Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2:40-51.

<sup>68</sup> Only v.41 from: The Qur'ān, tr. E. H. Palmer (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> 'Allamah M. Asad translates it as:

And do not overlay the truth with falsehood, and do not knowingly suppress the truth (The Message, p.10).

He has also recorded a footnote to the verse as below:

By 'overlaying the truth with falsehood' is meant the corrupting of the Biblical text, of which the Qur'ān frequently accuses the Jews (and which has since been established by objective textual criticism), while the 'suppression of the truth' refers to their disregard or deliberately false interpretation of the words of Moses in the Biblical passage, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken' (Deuteronomy xviii, 15),

prayer; practise regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship). <sup>44</sup>Will you bid others to piety and forget yourselves, while you recite the Book? Do you not understand?<sup>70</sup>

<sup>45</sup>Seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance and prayer: It is indeed hard, except to those who are humble-minded, <sup>46</sup>who *seriously* think they shall meet their Lord, and that to him they shall return.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>47</sup>O children of Israel! remember those blessings of mine with which I graced you, and how I favoured you above all other people; <sup>48</sup>and remain conscious of (the coming of) a Day when no human being shall in the least avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted from any of them, nor ransom taken from them, and none shall be succoured. <sup>49</sup>And [remember the time] when We saved you from Pharaoh's people: who afflicted you with cruel suffering, slaughtering your sons and sparing [only] your women - which was an awesome trial from your Sustainer; <sup>50</sup>and [remember] when We cleft

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and the words attributed to God Himself, 'I will raise them up a prophet from among thy brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth' (Deuteronomy xviii, 18). The 'brethren' of the children of Israel are obviously the Arabs, and particularly the *musta'ribah* ('Arabianized') group among them, which traces its descent to Ishmael and Abraham: and since it is to this group that the Arabian Prophets own tribe, the Quraysh, belonged, the above Biblical passages must be taken as referring to his advent (The Message, p.10f).

J. Arberry (p.6) has translated the verse as:

And do not confound the truth with vanity, and do not conceal the truth wittingly.

<sup>70</sup> Only verse 44 from: *The Koran Interpreted*, tr. A. J. Arberry (Oxf. Univ. Press, 1983), p. 6.

<sup>71</sup> Only verse 46 from: *The Koran*, tr. George Sale (London: Frederick Warne & Co Ltd., n.d.), p.7.

the sea before you, and thus saved you and caused Pharaoh's people to drown before your very eyes;<sup>72</sup>

The Israelites, however, failed to submit before the will of the Lord and rebelled against Him and His prophets. They broke the covenant with the Lord again and again by worshiping false gods of other nations and also by various transgressions of the law of the Lord. They paid no heed to the fact that their special distinction was in complying with the covenant and in obeying the prophets of the Lord sent to them. Contrary to this, they gave priority to their temporal benefits. Acquisition of land, power and wealth became predominantly important for the Israelites for which they blatantly sacrificed the moral values and commandments of the Lord in the covenant. Except for short intervals during the leadership of Joshua<sup>73</sup>, Samuel, and the reign of David (pbAh), Solomon (pbAh) and King Josiah<sup>74</sup>; the Israelites have mostly been

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<sup>72</sup> Verses 47-51's translation by: 'Allamah M. Asad *The Message*, p.11).

<sup>73</sup> Joshua [was] the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. He was nearly forty years old when he shared in the hurried triumph of the exodus. He is mentioned first in connection with the fight against Amalek at Rephidim, when he was chosen by Moses to lead the Israelites. He was one of the twelve chiefs who were sent to explore the land of Canaan, and one of the two who gave an encouraging report of their journey. Moses, shortly before his death, was directed to invest Joshua with authority over the people (See W. Smith, *Dic. of the Bible*, 1984, p.323)

<sup>74</sup> Josiah succeeded his father Amon BC 641, in the eighth year of his age, and reigned 31 years. (...), he destroyed everywhere high places, groves, images, and all outward signs and relics of idolatry. The temple was restored under



rebellious against the Lord. A major part of the books of the Prophets bears witness to the depravity of the Israelites. Eventually, they were accursed by the Lord and punished again and again. In spite of all this, the Israelites did not repent, nor did they turn to the Lord. They openly refused to obey the Lord and assassinated abused others. This was the plight of Israel leading them to successive defeats at the hands of different nations. Finally they were dispersed into various parts of the world. Since they had a long history of slavery, defeat and subjugation by others, therefore, their claim as a great nation can only be treated as a fabulous claim rather than a ground reality and is to be ruled out.

## 2) *Promise to multiply exceedingly*

The Lord said to Abraham (pbAh):

And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.<sup>75</sup>

The same promise has been extended to Ishmael (pbAh) in the following words:

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, *and*

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a special commission; and in the course of the repairs Hilkiah the priest found that book of the law of the Lord which quickened so remarkably the ardent zeal of the king. He was aided by Jeremiah the prophet in spreading through his kingdom the knowledge and worship of Jehovah (W. Smith's *Dic. of the Bible*, 1984, p.324).

<sup>75</sup> Gen 17:2 KJV.

will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and *I will make him a great nation*<sup>76</sup>

Nothing succeeds like success: in every nook and corner of the Muslim world there are thousands rather millions of the offspring of Ishmael (pbAh). In the non-Muslim states as well; in NY, London, Paris, Bonn, Amsterdam, Moscow, Glasgow, Chicago, Washington, Honolulu, Copenhagen, Hawaii, Tokyo, Seoul, Taiwan, Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Rome, Oslo, Geneva, etc. etc., one is bound to encounter some of the Arabs every now and then in every walk of life. This can genuinely be claimed as the fulfillment of the '*Promise to multiply exceedingly*'.

### 3) *Promise of exceeding fruitful*

God said to Abraham (pbAh):

I will make thee exceeding fruitful...<sup>77</sup>

The same was repeated to Ishmael (pbAh):

(...) will make him fruitful.<sup>78</sup>

And history tells without any shadow of doubt that this promise was fulfilled in the true sense of the word. They have brought the message of Allah throughout the world and it is most rapidly spreading in the universe; whereas the Jews are a close clan, and in their very structure and nature they are deprived of any flourishes.

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<sup>76</sup> Gen 17:20 KJV.

<sup>77</sup> Gen 17:6 KJV.

<sup>78</sup> Gen 17:20 KJV.

#### 4) God's blessings:

God said to Abraham (pbAh):

And I will make of thee a great nation, and *I will bless thee* [stress added], and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: Gen 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: *and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed* [stress added].<sup>79</sup>

The promise to bless Abraham (pbAh) (Gen 12:3) stood fulfilled primarily in Ishmael (pbAh) with the verdict of the Lord that 'I have blessed him' (Gen: 17:20). As for the promise that 'in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed', it was fulfilled in the history mainly through Ishmael (pbAh) and his descendants. On the other hand the Israelites considered themselves to be the chosen people of God to the exclusion of all others. They pose themselves as the only sons of God. As such, the Israelites contradict the word of God by constricting the all-encompassing blessings of God only unto the seed of Isaac (pbAh) excluding all the nations of the world, and even all other genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh) and his followers. We can, therefore, identify many such interpolations in the text.

In Gen., after the good news about Isaac (pbAh):

and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Gen 12:2-3 KJV.

<sup>80</sup> Gen. 17:19 KJV.

The same has also been repeated in the following :

But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.<sup>81</sup>

Since these verses restrict the all-inclusive blessings of the Lord only to the seed of Isaac (pbAh), therefore, they contradict the promise of the Lord that 'in thee all families of the earth will be blessed'. obviously the Israelites have interpolated the text to serve their own interest. They, however, fail to realize that the course of history cannot be changed by such futile distortions in the text. That no one can change the predestination or plan of the Lord is obvious from the following.

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ .<sup>82</sup>

You are not able to frustrate Him either in the earth or in heaven; and you have not, apart from God, either protector or helper.<sup>83</sup>

The Holy Qur'ān tells that all prophets preached one and the same religion of God and Abraham (pbAh) specially emphasized the same (Al-Qur'ān 2:128, 132). Although Abraham (pbAh) had clearly told his descendants to adopt the same religion (Islam), yet the Israelites did not follow the advice of Abraham (pbAh). Neither they adopted the name of their religion, nor did they follow the traditions and faith of

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<sup>81</sup> Gen 17:21 KJV.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Qur'ān, (Al-'Ankabūt) 29:22.

<sup>83</sup> Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (Oxf. Univ. press, 1983), p.405.

Abraham (pbAh). Similarly, the followers of Jesus (pbAh) named their religion after Jesus Christ (pbAh). As such, the names of both these religions, i.e. 'Judaism' and 'Christianity', do not denote continuity or universality of the one and the same true faith in God. We, therefore, observe that both Judaism and Christianity in their present name and form do not accord with the universal religion of all the prophets of the Lord from Adam (pbAh) to Muhammad (pbAh). As against this, Islam means 'surrendering to the will of the one and the only God of the universe since all eternity'. It believes in all the true prophets of the Lord preaching the same universal and ever-lasting faith in the Almighty. Abraham (pbAh) being the spiritual father in faith, the Muslims have been enjoined to follow the excellent example set by him:

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ (...). لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَمِيدُ

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You have had a good example in Abraham, and those with him, when they said to their people, 'We are quit of [or: 'we have nothing to do with'] you and [with] that [whom] you serve [worship], apart from God. We disbelieve in you, and between us and you enmity has shown itself, and hatred for ever, until you believe in God alone.' (...). You have had a good example in them for whoever hopes for God and the Last Day. And whosoever turns away,

<sup>84</sup> Al-Qur'ān 60:4,6.

surely God is the All-Sufficient, the All-Laudable.<sup>85</sup>

The Qur'ān tells that the Lord had put Abraham (pbAh) under severe tests, in which he turned out successful:

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ.<sup>86</sup>

And (remember) when his Lord tried Abraham with [certain of] (His) commands, and he fulfilled them, He said: 'Lo! I have appointed thee [an Imām] a leader for mankind.' (Abraham) said: 'And of my offspring (will there be leaders)?' He said: 'My covenant includeth not wrongdoers.'<sup>87</sup>

This shows that the Lord had made Abraham (pbAh) the leader of the humankind, but when he desired the same for his progeny, the Lord said that *His promise did not extend to the evil-doers*. As such, the evil-doers are excluded from the blessings of God even if they be direct descendants of Abraham (pbAh). God's blessings extend through Abraham (pbAh) to all those people of the world who believe in the Lord, the only God of the universe, who worship only Him, and do good.

It is to be noted with concern that by their own insertions in the text, the Israelites have restricted to themselves the unlimited blessings of the Lord which were to be extended to all the nations of the world. They insist that blessings of the Lord are for none except the Israelites. As against this, the Muslims believe in Allah, the sole Creator and Sustainer of all

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<sup>85</sup> A. J. Arberry, 1983, p.577f.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah 2:124.

<sup>87</sup> A. J. Arberry, 1983, p.577f.

the creatures and heavenly bodies in the universe. Equality of humankind and universality of the blessings of the Lord are, therefore, the basic creed of the Muslims. God treats the people strictly in accordance with their faith and deeds irrespective of their caste, color, creed, ancestry or region. The Muslims believe in a classless society in which there is no privileged class, nor does any one stand deprived or disqualified on the basis of his birth. Any human being, red or yellow, black or white, who turns to God, and submits his will before the will of the Lord, is entertained by the Lord in accordance with his own deeds irrespective of the fact whether he be a descendant of Abraham (pbAh) or of someone else. God shows no partiality to anyone in the world. Islam, from the very beginning, presents a cosmopolitan view of the blessings through Abraham and Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) who was declared as a blessing for all the people of the world.

## UNIVERSALITY OF FAITH IN ISLAM AND THE RESTRICTIVE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE JEWS

### Universal Blessings of God in Islam

The universality of Islam is evident from the following:

**i)** The first verse of the first Surah of Al-Qur'ān starts with the words:

الحمد لله رب العالمين .<sup>88</sup>

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;

This shows that the God of the Muslims is the God of all the worlds. He is not the God of the Israelites, the Christians, the Ishmaelites or any other nation exclusively. Allah is the God of the earth as well as the God of all the heavenly bodies including all creatures in the universe.

**ii)** Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) has been sent as

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<sup>88</sup> Al-Qur'ān 1:1.



mercy to all the worlds. God addresses the Holy Prophet in the following words:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ . 89

We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.

Although ‘العالمين’ may mean all the creatures, yet some commentators believe that the term pertains specifically to only two creatures’ i.e the Jinn and human beings. Even in this case, Prophet Muhāmmad (pbAh) is a Messenger and a blessing to the entire community of Jinni and human beings. As far as the humankind is concerned, it is clear that Prophet Muhāmmad’s mission to preach and guide, encompasses all the human beings:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا أَنَا لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ . 90

Say: 'O human beings! I am (sent) to you only to give a clear warning.'<sup>91</sup>

**iii)** God has Himself introduced Al-Qur'ān as an admonition to all the people in the world:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا . 92

Blessed is He Who hath revealed unto His slave the Criterion (of right and wrong), that he may be a warner to the peoples.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Al-Qur'ān Al-Anbiyā (The Prophets) 21:107.

<sup>90</sup> Al-Qur'ān 22:49.

<sup>91</sup> The Holy Qur'ān, tr, A. Yusuf Ali (Beirut: Dar al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, AH 1403), 22:49, p.864.

<sup>92</sup> Al- Qur'ān, Al-Furqan 25:1.

<sup>93</sup> *The Glorious Koran*, tr. Muhāmmad Marmaduke Pickthall, 25:1.

هَذَا بَلَاغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا بِهِ وَلِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيُنذَرُوا  
الْأُتُبَابَ.<sup>94</sup>

This is a clear message for mankind in order that they may be warned thereby, and that they may know that He is only One God, and that men of understanding may take heed.<sup>95</sup>

**iv)** The mission of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) also covers the entire world:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.<sup>96</sup>

And We have not sent thee (O Muh□ammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind; but most mankind know not.<sup>97</sup>

The same universality is found in the following verses of the Qur'ān which show that Islam is not meant for any particular nation, race or region; it is for all the people on the earth:

وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا.<sup>98</sup>

We have sent thee (Muh□ammad) as a messenger unto [the whole of the] mankind and Allah is sufficient as witness.<sup>99</sup>

أَكَاَنَّ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ.<sup>100</sup>

It is a wonder for mankind that We have inspired a

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<sup>94</sup> Al- Qur'ān, Abraham, 14:52.

<sup>95</sup> The *Glorious Koran*, tr. M Marmaduke Pickthall, 14:52.

<sup>96</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Saba 34:28.

<sup>97</sup> The *Glorious Koran*, tr. M Marmaduke Pickthall, 34:28.

<sup>98</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:79.

<sup>99</sup> The *Glorious Koran*, tr. M Marmaduke Pickthall, 4:79.

<sup>100</sup> Al-Qur'ān 10:3.

man among them, saying: Warn [all the] mankind.<sup>101</sup>

وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا أَخِّرْنَا إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ.<sup>102</sup>

And warn [all the] mankind of a day when the doom will come upon them, and those who did wrong will say: Our Lord! Reprieve us for a little while.<sup>103</sup>

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ.<sup>104</sup>

Say: O mankind! I Am only a plain warner unto you.<sup>105</sup>

**v)** Ka'bah was declared by God as the house of the Lord on earth:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ.<sup>106</sup>

Surely, the first House appointed for [the worship of the whole] humankind was that at Bakka: Full of blessing and of *guidance for all beings* [stress added].

The same has been asserted at another place:

إِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ.<sup>107</sup>

And LO! We made the Temple a goal to which people might repair again and again, and a

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<sup>101</sup> *The Glorious Koran*, tr. M Marmaduke Pickthall, 10:3.

<sup>102</sup> Al-Qur'ān 14:44.

<sup>103</sup> *The Glorious Koran*, tr. M Marmaduke Pickthall 14:44.

<sup>104</sup> Al-Qur'ān 22:49.

<sup>105</sup> *The Glorious Koran*, tr. M Marmaduke Pickthall, 22:49.

<sup>106</sup> Al-Qur'ān 3.96.

<sup>107</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:125.

sanctuary [and a place of safety for (all the) humankind]: take, then, the place whereupon Abraham once stood as your place of prayer. And thus did We command Abraham and Isma'il: 'Purify My Temple for those who will walk around it, and those who will abide near it in meditation, and those who will bow down and prostrate themselves [in prayer].'<sup>108</sup>

**vi)** Abraham (pbAh) along with Ishmael (pbAh) raised the walls of the same ancient house of the Lord at Makkah. Subsequently, he was directed to call all the people of the world to perform Hājj there. He, therefore, called all human beings for Hājj at Makkah. It was mandatory for all the people generally and for the descendants and followers of Abraham (pbAh) particularly to offer their sacrifices and prayers facing towards Ka'bah:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءَ الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِالْحَادِ بِظُلْمٍ نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ. وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ. وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ. لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَى مَا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَاكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطِيعُوا أَوَاثِمَ الْبَاسِ الْفَقِيرَ. ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ.<sup>109</sup>

Those who disbelieved, and are (now) debarring others from the way of Allah and from visiting that Sacred Mosque, which We have assigned to all mankind with equal rights for its dwellers and the outsiders (surely deserve punishment); whosoever shall deviate from righteousness, and adopts in this

<sup>108</sup> Allamah M. Asad, 'The Message', p.26).

<sup>109</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Al-Hājj [The Pilgrimage] 22:25-29.

(Sacred Mosque) the way of inequity, We will make him taste a painful chastisement.

Recall to mind the time when We assigned the site of this House (the Ka'bah) to Abraham, saying,

Do not associate anything as a partner with Me; keep My House clean and pure for those who go round it and for those who stand and bow down and prostrate (in worship), and make a proclamation to the people to come to you for Hajj from far and near, on foot and on lean camels, so that they may witness the benefits that have been made available here for them; and during the known appointed days, they should mention the name of Allah over the cattle He has provided them: then they may eat their flesh and also give of it to the indigent and needy. Then they should clean off their 'dirt', fulfill their vows and go round the 'Ancient House'.<sup>110</sup>

As against the universality of faith of the Muslims in God, the Israelites refused to share God or His blessings with others. Twelve tribes of Israel had always been the concern of Israel and the '*God of Israel*' seems to have disowned all mankind except them. They address the Lord as '*God of Israel*' to preclude others. This acute sense of possessiveness of the Israelites has opened a broad way towards multiplicity of Gods and polytheism, and paved the way to reducing the all-encompassing domain and cosmopolitan sovereignty of God of the universe. This common belief of the masses of Israel, therefore, encourages and contributes towards the development

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<sup>110</sup> Syed Abul A'la Maududi, The Holy Qur'ān., Eng. Rendering by M. Akbar, A.A. Kamal (Lahore: Isl. Publications., 2008), p.559.

of polytheism as against the strictly monotheistic teachings of Abraham (pbAh), Moses (pbAh) and all other true prophets of the Lord.

'*God of Israel*' usually remained confined within the tabernacle or '*locked up*' in the temple at Jerusalem which was the central place of worship for the Israelites. God was supposed to live with the Israelites and to march ahead of them and help them in the war. They posed themselves as the '*chosen people*' and the *sons of God*, and also the *only people of God*. *It was presumed and professed that there could be no salvation outside Israel*. Subsequently, even the Christians after breaking their ties with Israel started worshipping two more gods i.e Jesus (pbAh) and Holy Spirit. They abrogated the Law of Moses (pbAh) and rebelled against the Lord by breaking the covenant of circumcision and the basic commandments in the covenant of Moses. *The Christians, too, maintain that there is no salvation outside the church*. This they do in the name of Jesus Christ (pbAh) who was himself circumcised and lived as a Jew and a strict follower of the laws of Moses (pbAh). Jesus (pbAh) knew nothing about the doctrine of salvation or the church as the sole custodian of the same. *He (Christ) never had the idea that he was God nor did he know about the divinity of the Holy Ghost*.

The main assignment of Moses (pbAh), the greatest prophet among the Israelites, was to deliver the Israelites from the yoke of the Egyptians and to lead them to a straight path towards the Lord. Other prophets after Moses (pbAh) kept their mission confined to Israel. Finally, Jesus (pbAh) came with a

clear cut declaration that 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel'<sup>111</sup>. He, therefore, forbade his apostles to go to any other people except the Israelites.

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.<sup>112</sup>

As such, the blessings of Abraham (pbAh) were denied to all other people in the world because the Israelites pretended that it was the exclusive privilege of the Israelites. This shows that the promise of the Lord to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham (pbAh) did not materialize through the Israelites. It, however, was subsequently fulfilled through the Ishmaelites with the advent of Prophet Muhāmmad (pbAh) who came as a blessing for all the worlds. *He (Muhāmmad pbAh) was the prophet foretold by Jacob (pbAh)<sup>113</sup> and by Moses (pbAh)<sup>114</sup>.* Besides this, there

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<sup>111</sup> Mat 15:24 KJV.

<sup>112</sup> Mat 10:5-6 KJV.

<sup>113</sup> 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and upon him shall the gathering of the people be.' (Gen. 49:10 KJV). For a detailed study of the prophecy, Mr. Abdus Sattar Ghauri's book '*Muhāmmad Rasūl Allah kae bārae maen Bible kī Chand Paeshīngo'iyān*' may be consulted.

<sup>114</sup> The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; (...). I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I

are numerous other references about Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) in the Bible which we have discussed in detail elsewhere.<sup>115</sup> We can, therefore, conclude that the blessings of Abraham (pbAh) to all the families on the earth cannot be fulfilled unless we include the Ishmaelites and other descendants of Abraham (pbAh) from his six other sons from his wife Keturah to transfuse the blessings to others.

Let us once again refer to the following verses for further study of the theme:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: *and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed* [stress added].<sup>116</sup>

The last phrase of verse 2 quoted above is: '*Thou shalt be a blessing*'. These boundless blessings of Abraham (pbAh) were to be permeated throughout the world. Instead of sharing those with others or distributing the same freely to all nations in the world, the Israelites did their best to confine the blessings to themselves and to prevent their

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shall command him. (Deu. 18:15, 19). For a detailed study of the prophecy, Mr. Abdus Sattar Ghauri's book '*Muhāammad Rasūl Allah kae bārae maen Bible kī Chand Paeshīngo'iyān*' may be consulted.

<sup>115</sup> Some of which can also be studied in Mr. Abdus Sattar Ghauri's book '*Muhāammad Rasūl Allah kae bārae maen Bible kī Chand Paeshīngo'iyān*' and '*Muhāammad Foretold in the Bible by Name*'.

<sup>116</sup> Gen 12 2-3 KJV.



transmission to any one outside the twelve tribes of Israel. *Instead of blessing others, the Israelites cursed all nations around them* including the direct descendants of Abraham (pbAh) by placing on them one blemish or the other. The Egyptians, the Ishmaelites, the Amalekites, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites and different nations of Canaanites were subjected to humiliation or the curse. The Bible also tells us that, in their actual history, the Israelites usually annihilated all the subjugated people sparing neither women nor children. Their houses were burnt and the animals put to death, e.g:

So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.<sup>117</sup>

And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males. And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword. And the children of Israel took *all* the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, *both* of men and of beasts. (...). Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man

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<sup>117</sup> Nu 21:35 KJV.

by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.<sup>118</sup>

And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city. But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves.<sup>119</sup>

(...), and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that *was* therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.<sup>120</sup>

And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. And *so* it was, *that* all that fell that day, both of men and women, *were* twelve thousand, *even* all the men of Ai.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Nu 31:7-11; 17, 18 KJV.

<sup>119</sup> Deu 3:6-7 KJV.

<sup>120</sup> Josh 6:20-24 KJV.

<sup>121</sup> Josh 8:20-24 KJV.

As such, if the Israelites claimed to be the only genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh), then all the nations of the world would have received blessings through them. Since, instead of blessing other nations of the world, the Israelites had destroyed, cursed, or denounced them, therefore, they had not served as the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) who might have been expected to administer the blessings of the Lord to all the nations of the world.

## GOD'S BLESSINGS ON HAGAR AND ISHMAEL (PBAH)

The Genesis asserts that the Lord had not only blessed Hagar but that she was also the lady who had been afforded the great honour to be directly addressed by God Himself<sup>122</sup>, which, in fact, is the

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<sup>122</sup> Some excerpts from a few of the authorities have been afforded below to establish the theme:

**The Oxf. BC**, ed. John Barton and John Muddiman, 2001, 51:

The words of the angel (malak) of YHWH who speaks to Hagar in 16:7 are identified with the words of YHWH himself in 16:13.

The New Oxf Annotated B, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edn, p.33:

Here the angel of the Lord is not a heavenly being subordinate to God but the Lord (Yahweh) in earthly manifestation, as is clear from v.13 (cf. 21;17,19; Ex 14:19).

**The New Jerusalem B**, 1993, p.35, FN on 16:7:

In the most ancient texts the angel of Yahweh or the angel of God is not a created being distinct from God, but God Himself in visible form. V.13 identifies the angel with Yahweh.

The Jerusalem B: Popular Edn., 1974, p. 19:

In the most ancient texts, 'the angel of Yahweh' is not a created being, but is God himself in a form visible to man.

**The Annotated Paragraph B** (London: The Religious tract

privilege of the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Messengers of God:

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Society, 1866), p.16:

This word is of frequent occurrence in the Bible; and signifies any Divine agent or messenger, (...), or, as here, when called the angel [of] Jehovah, God himself appearing in human form (Exod xxiii.20, 21).

**New BC 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edn**, (Leicester: Inter-Versity Press, 2005), 72f:

On the run from her mistress, Hagar met *the angel of the LORD*, God in human form (...). Hagar was assured that her descendants would be too numerous to count, just as Abraham had been told earlier (13:16). Her child's name would be Ishmael (...). But though Sarai had hoped that the child would count as her child, vs [16:] 15-16 makes (sic) it quite clear that Ishmael was the son of Hagar and Abram and not Sarai's child. Her scheme had failed to produce a child for her. But was Ishmael Abram's promised son? We are left to wonder, but 17:18 shows that Abram at least had concluded Ishmael was the child God had promised.

**A Catholic Com. On Holy Scripture**, ed Dom Bernard Orchard *et al* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960), p.195:

'The angel of Yahweh' is identified in [16:] 13 with Yahweh himself; so also 31:11 and 13. 'The Israelites did not ask himself how Yahweh can also be called the Messenger of Yahweh. It is one of the obscurities in which the OT abounds', Heinisch. Rather Yahweh is said to speak because the Angel spoke in his name.

**The Jerome Biblical Com**, ed. Raymond E. Brown, etc (Bangalore: TPI, 1987), p.20:

The 'angel of the Lord' is, etymologically, a 'messenger' (malak). From v.13, it is evident that the story originally depicted an appearance of God himself. The 'angel' seems a later attempt (repeated in other appearances in Gn) to soften the anthropomorphism.

It is sufficient evidence to prove the theme.

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And the angel of the LORD (...). And he said, Hagar, (...). And the angel of the LORD said unto her, (...), I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.<sup>123</sup> And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.<sup>124</sup>

In the next chapter of this very 'Book of *Genesis*' it has been asserted:

And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, (...). And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her [Sarai]<sup>125</sup>: Yea, I will bless her [Sarai] and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.<sup>126</sup> (...). And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before Thee! (...). And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him [i.e. I have '*already*' blessed him], and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.<sup>127</sup>

At another place of the Genesis, it has been recorded:

God heard the boy crying, and from heaven the

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<sup>123</sup> Obviously, it can be only God himself Who could have said, 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.' It is not an angel's job.

<sup>124</sup> Gen: 16:7-11 KJV.

<sup>125</sup> '*And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her*' shows that the 'gift of a son' is a blessing. And Hagar had already been given this blessing.

<sup>126</sup> '*I will bless her [Sarai] and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her*' shows that Sarah too was blessed in this manner. And it is to be noted that Hagar had already been granted this 'blessing'.

<sup>127</sup> Gen 17:15-16, 19, 20.

angel of God spoke to Hagar, 'What are you troubled about [in KJV, '*what aileth thee*'], Hagar? Don't be afraid. God has heard the boy crying. Get up, go and pick him up, and comfort him. I will make a great nation out of his descendants.' Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well. She went and filled the leather bag with water and gave some to the boy. God was with the boy as he grew up<sup>128</sup>; he lived in the wilderness of Paran and became a skillful hunter.<sup>129</sup>

The KJV has recorded it in the following words:

<sup>17</sup>And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, *what aileth thee, Hagar?*<sup>130</sup> fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*. <sup>18</sup>Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make him a great nation.<sup>131</sup>

The above excerpts from three chapters of the book of 'Genesis' of the Bible (16:7-11; 17:15-20; 21:17-20)

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<sup>128</sup> '*God heard the boy crying,*' implies that God was not unheedful and unconcerned about the boy Ishmael and that He came to console, comfort, and rescue him. Secondly He directs Hagar to extend proper care and rearing to the boy. Thirdly, He declares and promises that He 'will make a great nation out of his descendants', Fourthly, God provided this new and small family with water in some miraculous manner whereas it was invisible on the surface. Fifthly that God was with the boy throughout his growth to provide him every protection, guidance, and necessities of livelihood and life.

<sup>129</sup> Gen 21:17-20 GNB.

<sup>130</sup> What a care, concern, sympathy, and affection is oozing out of these words of the Lord: *what aileth thee, Hagar?*!

<sup>131</sup> Gen. 16:7,8,9,10,11,13; Gen. 21:17,18.

contain the following points:

1) Hagar was afforded the great honour to be directly addressed by the LORD Himself. Ample evidence from a number of authorities has been afforded in the footnote below that '*the angel of God*' here means '*God himself*'. On the other hand there is no mention of God's addressing Sarah directly. Even at the time of breaking the news of the birth of Isaac, the angels did not address Sarah directly; they rather delivered the good news to Abraham (pbAh) and not to Sarah, although she was very much present there in person (Gen 18:9,10,13,14).

2) Hagar was promised by the grace of the Almighty God: '*I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude* (Gen 16:10)', which is obviously a blessing.<sup>132</sup>

3) Hagar had been given the Good News and was promised by the Almighty Allah that: '*Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son* (it is also a blessing), *and shalt call his name Ishmael* (Gen 16:11);'

4) It reveals that the name 'Ishmael' was given to the boy by God himself '*because the LORD hath heard thy [Hagar's] affliction.*' The meanings of the word Ishmael show that Hagar was blessed with the acceptance of her prayers.

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<sup>132</sup> J. L. McKenzie's *Dic of the B* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984), p.98, explains 'Blessing' as:

The effect of the blessing most frequently mentioned is fertility, whether in men, animals, or crops(...). In each of these blessings there is a command to be fruitful and multiply. (...), the formula is otherwise the same: the result of the blessing will be an innumerable progeny.



5) God told about Sarah: '*I will bless her [Sarai]*'<sup>133</sup>.

6) Gen 17:16 explains the 'blessing' of Sarah as: (a) God will give her a son; (b) She shall be a mother of nations; (c) kings of people shall be of her.

7) Both Sarah and Hagar are 'mothers of nations' alike They are also progenitors of kings and princes.

According to *McKenzie's* the effects of the 'blessigs' are:

(a) fertility, i.e. to be fruitful and multiply; and

(b) innumerable progeny;

These favours have been promised and eventually afforded both to Sarah and Hagar alike, so, virtually, both of them had been blessed by God. The omission of the word 'blessing' in favour of Hagar, here in the present and pertinent context, shows an obvious prejudice of the redactors of the Bible.

*Harper* has also defined 'blessing' in similar terms:

The content of 'Blessing' includes such goods as vitality, health, longevity, fertility, and numerous progeny; 'curse' on the other hand, results in death, illness, childlessness and such disasters.<sup>134</sup>

8) The care and concern of the Lord and His affection in His words '*what aileth thee, Hagar? Don't be afraid.*' is note-worthy.

9) 'And Abraham said unto God, *O that Ishmael might live before Thee!*' shows Abraham's deep concern for Ishmael.

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<sup>133</sup> Gen 17:16.

<sup>134</sup> *Harper's BD*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier, et al, TPI Bangalore, 1990, p. 199.

10) Regarding Ishmael God categorically asserted: 'And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation (Gen 17:20).'

Gen 17:20 quoted above confirms that God heard and accepted the prayer of Abraham (pbAh) in favour of Ishmael bestowing *five blessings on him*. God says:

- a) I have blessed him (Ishmael).
- b) I will make him (Ishmael) fruitful.
- c) I will multiply him (Ishmael) exceedingly.
- d) Twelve princes shall he (Ishmael) beget.
- e) And I will make him (Ishmael) a great nation.

It shows that the Lord heard Ishmael's cry and from heaven he addressed Hagar and assured her to make a great nation out of the descendants of Ishmael (pbAh). This affirms that both Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) were bounteously blessed by the Lord. This blessing rejects the pretension of the Israelites that Hagar and Ishmael were cast-out or discarded by the Lord. On the other hand, Ishmael was the lad whose voice had been heard by God in the heaven and He assured Hagar to make a great nation out of his descendants. The other assurance, that God was with the boy as he grew up, reveals God's deep concern towards the boy and is a clear-cut warning that nobody should dare to despise, denounce, or harm him.

Abraham (pbAh), in fact, had a strong feeling of deep affection for Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh). The filial attachment is greater everywhere for the first-born

son. It was more so in case of Ishmael (pbAh) who was granted to Abraham (pbAh) by the Lord in response to his prayers in the old age. Hagar was young as well as a faithful wife of Abraham (pbAh). She also had the privilege of being the mother of Ishmael (pbAh), the first-born of Abraham (pbAh). It was not, therefore, conceivable that Abraham (pbAh) could have thought of throwing her away without any concern for the gifts of God, i.e. Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh), only to satisfy the alleged whimsical jealousy of Sarah. As such, we find no adequate reason to entertain the malevolent and unjustified desire and demand of Sarah to cast out Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) in the manner the Genesis describes. *A Catholic Com. on Holy Scripture* says:

The sons of slave wives could be given the same rights as those of the first, chief wife as in the case of the sons of Jacob. No distinction was made between the sons of Bala [Bilha<sup>135</sup>] and Zelpha<sup>136</sup> and those of Rachel<sup>137</sup> and Lia [Lea]. Hence Sara

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<sup>135</sup> 'Bilhah' was a slave given to 'Rachel' by 'Laban' (the father of 'Leah' and 'Rachel').

<sup>136</sup> 'Zelpha' was the slave of Jacob's wife Leah to whom she was given by Laban. As a substitute for the wife she bore 'Gad' and 'Asher' (Gen 30:9-12; 35:26; 46:18).

<sup>137</sup> 'Rachel' was the younger daughter of Laban and wife of Jacob. Jacob worked for Laban for 7 years as the purchase price of Rachel; but Laban substituted Leah for Rachel in the wedding ceremony and Jacob had to work another 7 years (Gen 29:6-31). Rachel was barren so she designated her slave Bilhah as a surrogate mother to provide a child for her (Gen 30:1-25), and finally herself bore Joseph. Later on Rachel also bore Benjamin (Gen 35:16-20; 48:7).

feared that Isaac's interests might suffer. (...). But this is hard to accept in view of an adoption contract among the Nuzu tablets (15-14 cent. BC), which stipulates that the son of a slave wife shall not be sent away.<sup>138</sup>

The Nelson Study Bible has also recorded:

When a surrogate<sup>139</sup> wife had born a son to one's husband, that mother and child could not be dismissed even if the first wife subsequently gave birth to a son. This partly explains Abraham's reluctance to do what Sarah demanded (v.11).<sup>140</sup>

As such Abraham's act of casting away is not credible; and that too at God's behest. Such partiality and injustice is unconceivable of God. According to all canons of justice and equity Sarah stood liable to be extended some befitting admonition and advice for such cruel-mindedness. Instead of it, she has been rewarded through the words: *'in all that Sarah hath said unto thee (Abraham), hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called'* (Gen 21:12), which is obviously futile and based on some blatant interpolation incorporated by some prejudiced redactor.

As to Ishmael (pbAh) God repeatedly affirmed him as the seed and son of Abraham (pbAh)<sup>141</sup>; and by no

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<sup>138</sup> *A Catholic Com. on Holy Scripture*, ed. Dom Bernard Orchard (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1960), p. 196.

<sup>139</sup> 'surrogate' means: 'substitute'.

<sup>140</sup> *The Nelson Study Bible*, 1997, p.43 (Gen 21:10f).

<sup>141</sup> 'And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar Bare, Ishmael.' (Gen. 16:15). 'And Abraham took *Ishmael his son* [stress added], (...); and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day,

means a 'pariah'<sup>142</sup>. Similarly regarding Hagar the OT testified *that God appeared to Hagar twice*: firstly in Gen 16:8-11; and secondly in 21:17-20, as recorded earlier in this chapter.

God heard the cry of the lad and his mother and through a miracle of the well of water saved the life of Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) (Gen. 21:19). God was with the boy (Ishmael pbAh) as he grew up (Gen.21-20). God also promised to Abram (pbAh) as under:

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great *nation*.<sup>143</sup>

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as God had said unto him.' (Gen. 17:23). 'And *Ishmael his son* [stress added] was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.' (Gen. 17:25). 'And also of *the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed* [stress added].' (Gen. 21-13 KJV). 'Ishmael was the first-born of his father' (W. Smith, *A Dic. of the Bible* 1967, p. 268).

<sup>142</sup> 'pariah' means: 'social outcast; (in India) person of no caste or of very low caste' (*Oxf. Adv. Learners Enc. Dic.*1994).

<sup>143</sup> Gen. 17:20 KJV.

## THE SEED OF ABRAHAM (PB<sup>AH</sup>)

The last sentence of Gen 21:12, i.e. 'in Isaac shall thy seed<sup>144</sup> be called' is evidently an interpolation. Its contradiction with the very next verse clearly exposes this interpolation, where it has been asserted about Ishmael (pb<sup>Ah</sup>):

And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he *is* thy seed.<sup>145</sup>

The sentence of Gen. 21:12 also contradicts other revelations of the Lord, e.g:

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be also numbered.<sup>146</sup>

As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be

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<sup>144</sup> According to *Strong's Dic of Heb Words of the OT*, p. 36, entry 2233 the original Hebrew word is: 'זֶרַע' (z+r+' or zera') which means: 'fig. fruit, plant, posterity, child'. In common English language it means: '[a substance] from which another plant can grow; (old use) offspring; semen (Oxf Adv Learner's Dic of Current Eng)'. It shows that at such places the Bible uses this word for a son.

<sup>145</sup> The Bible Gen 21:13 KJV.

<sup>146</sup> The Bible Gen. 13:16 KJV.

Abraham: for a father of many nations have I made thee. (...). And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.<sup>147</sup>

And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, *because he is thy seed*. (...). Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.<sup>148</sup>

Because all these verses show Abraham (pbAh) as the father of many nations and also confirm Ishmael (pbAh) as the son of Abraham (pbAh), therefore, confining the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) to Isaac is a flagrant denial of the work of God, Who, besides Isaac (pbAh), had granted Abraham (pbAh) his first born Ishmael (pbAh) and six other sons from his wife Keturah. All descendants from these sons of Abraham (pbAh) were, therefore, the genuine, legitimate and factual seed of Abraham (pbAh) which cannot be denied merely on the basis of some interpolations, which are themselves crying out audaciously to be the handiwork of some crafty redactor of the book of Genesis of the Bible.

The story of casting out Ishmael (pbAh) and Hagar so unconcernedly without any reason is also incompatible with the overall character of Abraham (pbAh) about whom the Lord asserts:

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَا يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ. شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعُمِهِ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ. 149

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<sup>147</sup> The Bible Gen. 17:4-5, 20 KJV.

<sup>148</sup> Gen. 21:13, 18 KJV.

<sup>149</sup> Al-Qur'an, An-Nahj 16.120-121.

Verily, Abraham was a man who combined within himself all virtues, devoutly obeying God's will, turning away from all that is false, and not being of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside God: [for he was always] grateful for the blessings granted by Him who had elected him and guided him onto a straight way.<sup>150</sup>

It cannot, therefore, be imagined that Abraham (pbAh), the man chosen by the Lord as a model and the one guided towards the straight path, could have ever resorted to partiality, injustice, cruelty or unequal treatment towards his own wife and son. Had it been a truth, Abraham (pbAh) would have been the worst model of inequity and injustice towards even his own house. As against such perverted suggestions of the Israelites, God confirmed him to be the most tender-hearted, enduring and also the man with righteous heart.<sup>151</sup> We know that the Lord had Himself confirmed that Abraham (pbAh) '*showed his gratitude for the favours of Allah*'.

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَمَا يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ. شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعَمِهِ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ. وَاتَّبَعَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ.<sup>152</sup>

Surely, Abraham was a nation [in himself] obedient unto God, a man of pure faith and no idolater [and neither was he of the idolaters], showing thankfulness for His blessings. He chose him, and He

<sup>150</sup> Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, p. 415.

<sup>151</sup> إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ (behold, Abraham was most tender-hearted, most clement—M. Asad, p.283; Al Qur'ān 9:114)]; and إِذْ جَاءَ رَبُّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ (when he turned to his Sustainer with a heart free of evil—M. Asad, p.687; Al Qur'ān 37:84)].

<sup>152</sup> Al-Qur'ān 16:121.



guided him to a straight path.<sup>153</sup>

Thus there seems to be no possibility for Abraham (pbAh) to banish thanklessly Ishmael and Hagar who were the divinely bestowed blessings on him. In view of this, the story of casting out Hagar and Ishmael is bound to be a blatant forgery and ought to be discarded outright. On the other hand if the contents of Gen. 21:12 be correct, then God will be considered the promoter of unequal and discriminatory treatment towards co-wives of Abraham (pbAh) and unjust and cruel handling of his children. As God Almighty must be kind and just towards all his creatures, therefore, it was absolutely unbecoming of Him to show partiality or injustice towards anyone in the manner recorded in Gen. 21:12. The verse being indecent and blasphemous can only be a fabrication of Israel, and can in no case be considered the word of God.

‘Son’ is a very common word and its sense is an integral part of every human language. Almost every sane fellow understands its significance. A person, who is born out of some other male person’s sperm, is called his son: whether he be a legitimate (a result of a legitimate bond-marriage) or illegitimate. It is quite unconceivable that Abraham could have developed an illegitimate sexual relation with some female. So it is impossible that he could have an illegitimate son. As such Ishmaelis Abraham’s lawful and legitimate son for all purposes. Now, if someone says that in Isaac shall Abraham’s seed be named and called, he is absolutely wrong. Natural and

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<sup>153</sup> A. J. Arberry, p.272.

genuine parentage cannot be changed through false and whimsical attributions or accusations. No sane and just person can assert that 'in Ishmael Abraham's seed shall not be called'. Ishmael was admittedly the fruit of Abraham's seed, sperm, and semen coming of the womb of Hagar who was his genuine and lawful mother. Even if somebody be an illegitimate son of a person, he will remain the son of that person and will not lose his status of sonship. He will not be attributed to some imaginary father: other than his actual and physical father. The Bible categorically asserts that Ishmael was Abraham's seed. If someone falsely claims that Ishmael's descendants will not be called Abraham's seed, his assertion will be rejected outright. It can thus be genuinely asserted that Ishmael's offspring is Abraham's seed for all purposes under all the canons of equity, sanity, law, and justice; and if they not be called the seed of Abraham, then whose seed they would be called!

In case some bitter rivalry had arisen between Sarah and Hagar, a righteous prophet like Abraham would have treated both wives equally. God, too, is not expected to enjoin injustice in the family. As such, it is unreasonable to believe that an old sage and saint like Abraham could ever think of throwing his son and his faithfully loving wife to a sure death in the desert.

Keeping in view the pious, selfless and righteous conduct of Sarah, the devoted companion of the great prophet Abraham (pbAh), we cannot assume that she could have uttered such derogatory remarks against Hagar, as recorded in Genesis:

Wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this

bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.<sup>154</sup>

It can thus be assumed that instead of the genuine words of Sarah, those remarks represent the rivalry of the Israelites against the Ishmaelites. Even the flimsy grounds relied upon as the cause of action against Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) do not justify the following ruthless reaction:

One day Ishmael, whom Hagar the Egyptian had born to Abraham, was playing with<sup>155</sup> Sarah's son Isaac<sup>156</sup>. Sarah saw them and said to Abraham, send this slave and her son away. The son of this woman must not get any part of your wealth, which my son Isaac should inherit.<sup>157</sup>

It be noted here that the so called negligible 'offence' pertains to only 'the son of Hagar the Egyptian', and the poor Hagar has nothing to do with it. She has no role in the incident. Even if it ever happened at all, she might not have even been present there when it happened. Why she has been tagged with Ishmael to be cast out for no involvement of her in the affair. Making a mountain out of a mole-hill, Sarah demands unto Abraham: 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac (KJV).' What a cruel and

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<sup>154</sup> Gen. 21:10 KJV.

<sup>155</sup> GNB has entered the following footnote here:  
playing with; or making fun of

<sup>156</sup> GNB has entered a very important footnote here:  
*Some ancient translations with Sarah's son Isaac; Hebrew does not have these words.*

<sup>157</sup> Gen. 21:9-10 GNB.

disproportionate punishment for such an innocently childish act! Look at the spiteful scorn alleged towards the great and noble Sarah that she doesn't even utter the names of these unfortunate creatures and calls them '*this bondwoman* [GNB: 'slave'] *and her son*': Just unconceivable! Look at the indiscreet interpolation of the redactor who paints so black such great personalities as Abraham and Sarah. Such a brutal suggestion cannot, therefore, be assigned to Sarah being the age-old companion of Abraham (pbAh) and groomed into righteous conduct in the company of the sage. As such, the commandment quoted below is nothing but a fabrication by some scribes of Israel:

And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.<sup>158</sup>

Abraham (pbAh) was a paragon of virtue and a model of piety, righteousness and justice for others to emulate. It cannot, therefore, be imagined that the Lord would have commanded Abraham (pbAh) to hearken unto the voice of Sarah, especially when the Lord had already admonished Adam (pbAh) severely for hearkening unto the voice of his wife:

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Gen 21:12 KJV.

<sup>159</sup> Gen 3:17 KJV.

In the garden of Eden God had denounced Adam's eating of the forbidden tree and paying heed to Eve's suggestion. In the case of Sarah, however, God plays the reverse role by telling Abraham (pbAh) to hearken unto her (Sarah's) heinous and unjustifiable demand. This shows that instead of being impartial, just and constant, God and His law became flexible and vulnerable to the needs of the Israelites. As such, God seems to have relinquished his own authority in favor of Sarah advising Abraham (pbAh) to obey her, irrespective of the consideration whether she tells Abraham (pbAh) to do something good or bad. Such a commandment shows lack of constancy of the Lord. Instead of enjoining the prophet to establish social justice and equity in the family, the Lord commanded Abraham to violate the Divine Law of justice and morality only to serve the interest of the Israel. Such commandments contradicting with God's universal and everlasting standards of justice, and, instead, showing partiality towards the Israelites, cannot, therefore, be taken as the word of God. It is to be considered a testimony to the corruption in the Bible.

## WHY THE DEROGATORY REMARKS AGAINST HAGAR AND ISHMAEL (PBAH)?

### *Revenge or Inferiority Complex*

Tracing the background we observe that the Israelites, in the ancient past, remained enslaved and oppressed under the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians. Even in the post-exilic<sup>160</sup> period, they remained under subjugation of the Greeks and the Romans. Due to the age-long periods of slavery, depression, forced hard labour and exile coupled with repeated defeats at the hands of powerful nations; the Israelites developed deep-rooted inferiority complex and failed to ventilate their feelings unless they declared themselves equal or even superior to other nations in the region.

It can be appreciated that the recorded history, the traditions, and even the narratives in the Genesis present a lowly picture of the ancient background of

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<sup>160</sup> McKenzie's *Dic of the Bible*, 1984, 254 explains 'Exile' as:

The period from the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC to the rebuilding of Jerusalem under the Persians beginning in 537 BC. (See J. L. McKenzie, 254).

Israel as compared with their assertion about their superiority in the subsequent writings. At the time of the Exodus, other descendants of Abraham (pbAh) and Lot (pbAh) were well-settled in Moab<sup>161</sup>, Edom<sup>162</sup>, Midian<sup>163</sup>, Trans-Jordan<sup>164</sup>, and in vast areas of the

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<sup>161</sup> *McKenzie* explains 'Moab' as:

A geographical and gentile name designating the territory E of the Dead Sea and S of the river Arnon, the modern Wadi el Mojib, and the people who inhabited this territory. (...). In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, not long before the entry of Israel into Canaan, an urban-agricultural civilization appeared in Moab, which endured as long as the Israelite monarchies. (...). The Moabite stone shows that the language of Moab was practically identical with Hb, and excavation of Moabite sites shows that the two peoples possessed substantially the same material culture. (...). Little is known of the religion of Moab; the chief deity was Chemosh. (...). Israelite folklore reckoned Moab as the descendants of Lot and his daughter (Gen 19:37). (See *McKenzie's Dic of the B*, 1984, p. 581).

<sup>162</sup> *McKenzie*, p. 211f explains 'Edom' as:

The name of a people and a land in the OT. The land extended to the S of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba [and even to the further SE (Editor)]. The kinship of the Israelites with Edom was explained in folklore by the descent of Edom from Jacob's elder son Esau (Gn 25:30; 32:4; 36:1ff; 1 Ch 1:35ff). (...). According to Dt 2:12,22 the sons of Esau dispossessed the Horites from the land: (...). Edom and Israel (later the kingdom of Judah) had a contiguous frontier on the south (Nm 34:3; Jos 15:1). Edom was conquered by David (2 S 8:14; 1 K 11:14-15). (...). Amaziah restored the rule of Judah over Edom (2 K 14:7 ff). (...). The wealth of Edom and its importance to Israel and other peoples were due to its control of the King's Highway (Nm 20:17), the great caravan trade route between Arabia and the Syrian and Palestinian coasts, to its mineral resources, and to its access to the Red Sea. (...). Edom was regarded as a seat of wisdom in Hb tradition (Je 49:7; Ob 8). Little is known about the religion of the Edomites.

<sup>163</sup> *McKenzie's Dic* p. 574 explains 'Midian' as:

Arabian Peninsula including the lands towards the north and east of Canaan. Many other nations, like Amalekites<sup>165</sup>, Kenites<sup>166</sup>, Kenizzites<sup>167</sup>,

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A nomadic tribe, Israelite kinship with Midian was recognized in the genealogy of Abraham, which included Midian among the descendants of Abraham through Keturah (Gn 25:2-4; 1 Ch 1-32 ff). (...). Moses fled to Midian from Egypt and married a Midianite wife (Ex 2:15 ff) and the vision of the burning bush occurred in Midian (Ex 3:1). The father-in-law of Moses, Jethro or Reuel, was a Midianite priest (Ex 18:1), (...). The Midianites appear as neighbours of Edom in 1 K 11:18. (...). Midian appears as a nomadic tribe every time it is mentioned and hence 'occupied' no territory; but nomadic tribes exercised a vague claim to certain pasture lands. The biblical data suggest a place not far from Sinai, between Edom and Paran on the road to Egypt (Abel). Other scholars suggest that this should be regarded as an extension of Midianite inhabitation, and prefer the identification of Midian[,] with the Midian of ancient Gk and Arab geographers which is located in N Arabia, SE of Edom and E and SE of the Gulf of Aqabah. (...). Midian is not mentioned in extrabiblical records.

<sup>164</sup> 'Trans-Jordan': The Oxf Eng Ref Dic, 1996 explains:

A river flowing southward for 320 km (200 miles) from the anti-Lebanon mountains through the Sea of Galilee into the Dead Sea. John the Baptist baptized Christ in the river Jordan. It is regarded as sacred not only by Christians but also by Jews and Muslims (p. 763).

'Trans' means: 'across; beyond'. As such 'Trans-Jordan' would mean: 'across or beyond the river Jordan while standing in Palestine, i.e. the territory situated in the east of the river Jordan which, today, is the kingdom of Jordan.'

<sup>165</sup> W. *Smith's D B.*, 1968, p. 34 explains 'Amalekites' as:

A nomadic tribe of uncertain origin, which occupied the peninsula of Sinai and the wilderness intervening between the southern hill-ranges of Palestine and the border of Egypt. Their wealth consisted in flocks and herds. (...). The Amalekites first came in contact with the Israelites at Rephidim, but were signally defeated. Ex 17:8-16. In union with the Canaanites they again attacked the Israelites on the



Kadmonites<sup>168</sup>, Hittites<sup>169</sup>, the Perizzites<sup>170</sup>, the

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borders of Palestine, and defeated them near Hormah. Num 14:45. Saul undertook an expedition against them. Their power was thenceforth broken, and they degenerated into a horde of banditti. Their destruction was completed by David. I Sam 30:1-17.

<sup>166</sup> *McKenzie's Dic of the Bible*, p. 471f explains 'Kenites' as:

A non-Israelite clan closely associated with Judah. According to Jgs 1:16 they accompanied Judah from the city of palms (Jericho) and settled in the steppes of Arad in the Negeb with the Amalekites.

<sup>167</sup> *McKenzie's Dic of the B*, p. 472 explains 'Kenizzites' as:

A clan closely associated with Judah. An Edomite origin of the clan is attested by the genealogy of Gn 36:11 which makes Kenaz, the eponymous ancestor of the clan, a grandson of Esau. The name reappears among the clans of Edom (Gn 36:15).

<sup>168</sup> W. Smith's *A Dic of the B*, 332 explains 'Kadmonites' as:

A people named in Gen. 15:19 only; one of the nations who at that time occupied the land (Canaan) promised to the descendants of Abram. The name is probably a synonym for the Bene-Kedem—'the children of the East'.

<sup>169</sup> W. Smith's *A Dic of the Bible*, 250 explains 'Hittites' as:

The nation descended from Cheth (AV: Heth), the second son of Canaan. Abraham bought from the 'children of Heth' the field and the cave of Macphelah, belonging to Ephron the Hittite. They were then settled at the town which was afterwards, under the new name of Hebron, to become one of the most famous cities of Palestine, and which then bore the name of Kirjath-arba. Gen. 23:19; 25:9. When the Israelites entered he promised land, we find the Hittites taking part against the invader, in equal alliance with the other Canaanite tribes. Josh. 9:1; 11:3, etc.

<sup>170</sup> W. Smith's *A Dic of Bible*, p. 500 explains 'Perizzites' as:

One of the nations inhabiting the land of promise before and at the time of its conquest by Israel. (BC 1450). They are continually mentioned in the formula so frequently occurring to express the promised land. Gen. 15:20; Ex. 3:8,

Rephaim<sup>171</sup>, the Amorites<sup>172</sup>, the Girgashites<sup>173</sup>, the Jebusites<sup>174</sup>, and the Canaanites<sup>175</sup> were already

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17; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11. The notice in the Book of Judges locates them in the Southern part of the holy land.

<sup>171</sup> W.Smith, *A Dic of B*, 215 explains 'Rephaim' (Giants) as:

The earliest mention of them is the record of their defeat by Chedorlaomer and some allied kings at Ashteroth Karnaim. (...). They were probably an aboriginal people of which the AMIM, ANAKIM, and ZUZIM were branches.

<sup>172</sup> W.Smith, *A Dic of the B.*, p. 37 explains 'Amorites' as:

One of the chief nations who possessed the land of Canaan before the conquest by the Israelites. As dwelling on the elevated portions of the country, they are contrasted with the Canaanites, who were the dwellers in the low lands; (...). They first occupied the barren heights west of the Dead Sea, at the place called afterwards Engedi. From this point they stretched west to Hebron. (...). After the conquest of Canaan nothing of importance is heard of the Amorites in the Bible.

<sup>173</sup> W.Smith, *A Dic of the B.*, p. 219 explains 'Girgashites' as:

One of the nations who were in possession of Canaan east of the Sea of Galilee before the entrance thither of the Children of Israel. Gen. 10:16; 15:21; Deu. 7:1.

<sup>174</sup> W.Smith, *A Dic of the B.*, p. 279f explains 'Jebusites' as:

Descended from the third son of Canaan. Gen. 10:16. the actual people first appear in the invaluable report of spies. Num. 13:29. 'Jebus which is Jerusalem,' lost its king in the slaughter of Beth-horon, (...), and its citadel finally sealed and occupied by David.

<sup>175</sup> W.Smith, *A Dic of the B.*, 103 explains 'Canaanites' as:

A word used in two senses: 1. A tribe which inhabited a particular locality of the land west of the Jordan before the conquest; and 2. The people who inhabited generally the whole of that country. 1. In Gen. 10:18-20 the seats of the Canaanite tribe are given as on the seashore and in the Jordan valley; 2. Applied as general name to the non-Israelite inhabitants of the land, as we have already seen was the case with 'Canaan'. 3. The Canaanites were the

enjoying prosperity as well as independence with a stronghold over their territories. Egyptians, in those days, were the most prosperous, advanced and powerful nation in the world, when a famine forced the way of Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah into Egypt. It is, therefore, implausible to think that under those circumstances, Abraham (pbAh) or Sarah could have enslaved Hagar, an Egyptian princess. Perhaps, such an act of a foreigner would have meant a disgrace to the king and the proud people of Egypt. Hence, the assertion alleging slavery to Hagar might also be depicting some vengeance of the Israelites against the Egyptians who kept them enslaved for, according to the Bible itself, about 400 years.

Due to the inferiority complex of the Israelites, they transferred the stigma of slavery or inferiority from the Israelites to all other nations around them. They show all other people as inferior to them or as slaves of Israel. They distorted the facts to degrade the Ishmaelites. The same has been the motive of the Israelites behind tracing the origin of the Ishmaelites to a concubine of Abraham (pbAh) than admitting her true status as a princess of Egypt and venerable wife of the Patriarch.

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descendants of Canaan. Their language was very similar to Hebrew.

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## THE LAME EXCUSE FOR EXPULSION

Anyone with an unbiased mind can easily discern something fishy in the account narrating expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. The flimsy allegation of Ishmael's playing with Isaac or even his mocking at him, is not an unusual event in any family of the world. Such routine events do not necessitate or justify even an admonition, not to talk of expulsion of one's first born son along with his mother, at the instigation of his step mother, especially when it entails their surely impending death in the wilderness due to lack of any means of sustenance there. It, therefore, seems that the so called allegation of Ishmael's playing with Isaac is a smoke-screen to conceal the vicious aspirations of the Israelites to establish their superiority over the Ismaelites. They knew that Ishmael stood before the House of the Lord at Makkah. They were not unaware of the fact that Ishmael was separated from the family only to serve as the first priest at the ancient house of the Lord. Being jealous of the sanctifying grace bestowed by the Lord on Ishmael, the Israelites concealed the true facts by inserting a perverted account of the dedication of Ishmael by showing Hagar and Ishmael (ﷺ) cast out of the family. The

Lord, however, was always with Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) and He profoundly blessed them and their descendants. As against this, God has always been inflicting various punishments on the stiff-necked rebellious and treacherous masses of the Israelites. Continual slavery had been the fate of Israel as chastisement from the Lord for their perversion and disobedience to Him.

It may also be noted that a major part of the Genesis had been compiled, composed, written, rewritten, and revised during periods between 952-300 BC. During all this period the Israelites had been struggling to strengthen their physical possessions in Canaan, and propagating that they were the only genuine descendants of Abraham (pbAh), and as such, the rightful inheritors of the land promised to him. The main fear lurking in the minds of the Israelites was from the Ishmaelites, the descendants of the first-born of Abraham (pbAh). They were, perhaps, afraid that the Ishmaelites might claim the share of the first-born, i.e. twice the share of Israel, from the land promised to Abraham (pbAh). To ward off any such claim from the Ishmaelites, the Israelites labeled Hagar as a slave woman whose descendants were born in slavery. The strategy was devised to make Isaac (pbAh) the only legitimate son of Abraham (pbAh). Again the Israelites disqualified Esau, the first-born of Isaac (pbAh), through false and frivolous accusations against him. Similarly, the descendants of Lot (pbAh) had also been depicted as illegitimate progeny of the great prophet by falsely defiling him and his daughters. As such, the Israeli scribes made

mischievous insertions in the Genesis to establish a fallacious primacy of the Israelites over all other nations in the region. Almighty Allah exposed their mischief and admonished them in the following words:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ  
ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ<sup>176</sup>

Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say: This is from Allah, so that they may take for it a small price; therefore woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.

Obviously no one can reap any real benefit by changing or concealing the word of God. The will of the Lord prevails and human writings cannot avert it. This is evident from the fact that Israeli writings could not help them retain the lands of Canaan/Palestine, except for the short duration which God had predetermined for them. In actual history, the Israelites held only parts of the region for about 650 years, whereas the Ishmaelites enjoyed the absolute possession of the entire region for about twice the period, as compared with the possession of Israel; and, in addition to it, they retained the possession of the Arabian Peninsula throughout their history. It clearly suggests that God Himself confirmed the right of the first-born for double the inheritance, by giving the descendants of Ishmael (pbAh) the possession of the land of Canaan twice the period as compared with the Israelites, as well as that of Arabia? Was it not

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<sup>176</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:79.

Allah *Subhānahu wa Ta'ālā* who made them the sovereigns over a substantial part of the world since the period of Ishmael (pbAh), and the same is continuing till date? As such the claim about the ever-lasting possession of the land by the Israelites stands factually wrong and falsified through the work of Almighty God in the actual history of the world. Instead of any ever-lasting possession, the Israelites stood finally expelled from Canaan and had been living in Diaspora since A.D. 130. Prior to it they had to suffer the destruction, genocide, extirpation and exile of the Jewish people of the northern (Israelite) kingdom at the hands of Assyrians in 722 BC; and of the southern (Judean) kingdom at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC; and at the hands of the Romans (Titus) in AD 70, etc. Had God promised the land of Canaan and Palestine to the Israelites as their permanent possession, they would not have suffered from the fate stated above. This must be so because the *'word of God does not fail'*; and *all that remains un-fulfilled is not the word of God*.

ISHMAEL (PBAH),  
THE FIRST BORN OF ABRAHAM (PBAH)  
AND NOT THE SON OF A SLAVE GIRL

There can be no denial of the fact that Ishmael (pbAh) was born in response to the prayers of Abraham (pbAh) in his old age. His bounteous birth was immediately acknowledged by Abraham (pbAh) by naming him Ishmael, which means '*God hears*' or '*God has heard*'. His birth was, therefore, an answer to Abraham's prayers; and *he was actually the son of promise*, as also affirmed by the Qur'ān:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ. فَبَشِّرْنَاهُ بِعِلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ.<sup>177</sup>

O my Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)! So We gave him the good news of a boy ready to suffer and endure.

According to both the Bible and the Qur'ān:

- 1 Abraham (pbAh) was a prophet and stood the tests and temptations of time triumphantly for the cause of the monotheistic faith.
- 2 He was childless even till his mid-eighties and he

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<sup>177</sup> Al-Qur'ān, As-Saffāt 37:100-101.



prayed to God for some pious progeny.

3 God heard and conceded to his supplication and promised him a son; and subsequently Ishmael was born to him of his legitimate and lawful wife, Hagar, an Egyptian princess.

4 It has been made abundantly clear in this book that Hagar, the mother of Abraham's first-born son Ishmael, was not a slave girl, as prejudicially and arbitrarily claimed by the unidentified redactors of the Bible; she was rather a princess of Egypt, as clearly admitted by the commentators of the Bible.

5 This Ishmael was Abraham's legitimate and lawful first-born son, for all purposes, and according to all canons of justice and equity.

6 Abraham planted him at Makkah in Arabia, near 'Bayt Allah' (House of the Lord) for the cause of propagation and promotion of monotheistic culture. When the boy became of age, Abraham was commanded by God to offer him as a sacrifice; which Abraham complied with willingly.

7 (As a reward of it) God gave him the good tidings of his second son Isaac out of his first wife Sarah.

Every body ought to accept the truth and bear it in mind.

Had Ishmael been a son of a slave girl, Sarah would have nothing to worry regarding the inheritance of Abraham. In that case Isaac would have been the major inheritor; and there was no cause of expelling the mother or the son, as recorded in Gen. 21:14. The Islamic sources confirm that Hagar and Ishmael were neither cast out nor were they pariah<sup>178</sup>. Abraham

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<sup>178</sup> 'pariah' means: 'social outcast; (in India) person of no

(pbAh) settled them in Makkah to serve the cause of the monotheistic faith there. The Israelites have concealed the true facts and have inserted an absolutely concocted story to humiliate the Ishmaelites. In spite of all such mis-statements, the Israelites failed to frustrate the design of God. The Lord did every thing as pre-destined by Him. The Lord also continued to send various inflictions on the Israelites as requital to their disobedience.

Even if it be supposed that Hagar was a slave girl, she could have only been the slave of Abraham (pbAh); and not of Sarah. The Bible asserts:

And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn (stay temporarily) there; (...) he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon<sup>179</sup>: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.<sup>180</sup> Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: That it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live

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caste or of very low caste' (*Oxf. Adv. Learners Enc. Dic.*1994, p. 650).

<sup>179</sup> It be born in mind that she is an old woman of 65; barren and past menopause (usu. Between 45-50: *Oxf. Dic & Thesaurus*). How could she had been so sexually attractive for such a great king!

<sup>180</sup> It means that Abraham already knew what was to happen with his wife. Had he regarded himself responsible for the protection of her chastity, as he was naturally required and expected to do, he would never have entered Egypt. But his intention to enter Egypt even at this cost, depicts him as a faithless person.

because of thee.<sup>181</sup> (...). The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh<sup>182</sup>: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated [GNB: 'treated'] Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.<sup>183</sup> And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that *he had*<sup>184</sup>.

The Israelites must not forget the oft-repeated reminder of God to them: 'never forget that you were slaves in Egypt'. Instead of remembering that they and their ancestors had been slaves in Egypt for many centuries, the Israelites pretend themselves to be from the royal stock besides claiming that they are the first-born of the Almighty. They also seem to believe that there could be no elevation of the Israelites without denouncing the others. Hence, the curses, the filthy stories and derogatory remarks against all other nations emanate from the same conception of the Israelites.

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<sup>181</sup> Is it the same Abraham who had accepted to be thrown in the pyre for the cause his faith; who is now selling his wife for the life of his soul and so 'that it may be well with me for thy sake.' What a distrust and disbelief in God and disloyalty towards his wife.

<sup>182</sup> It is unbecoming of the Egyptian princes to suggest such a nasty act to their father, the king.

<sup>183</sup> It be noted that it was 'he' (Abraham) who was given all this (including 'maidservants'); and nothing was given to Sarah. Then how can Hagar become Sarah's maid, even if she be a slave.

<sup>184</sup> Gen 12:10-20 KJV. Here again the words **he had** are to be noted. It clearly means that the owner of whatever was given by Pharaoh was Abraham and not Sarah.

They should rather take the stock of their history of slavery, disgrace, persecution, shameful and exile at the hands of so many nations of the world; and should also remember that it were only the Muslims throughout the annals of history who afforded them refuge, rescue, protection, and comfort.

There are other reasons, as well, that dispel the misconception about the slavery of Hagar. Some of them are given below:

**1)** It is reported: 'when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.'<sup>185</sup> This, in itself, is an evidence that Hagar was not a slave girl of Sarai; otherwise she could not have dared despise her mistress. It is only with the co-wives who enjoy equal status that the one who excels the other, may despise the one who lags behind or vice versa.

**2)** The Genesis also tells that Abraham (pbAh) prayed to the Lord: 'O that Ishmael might live before [in the presence of] thee.'<sup>186</sup> At another place the Lord says: 'God was with the boy [Ishmael] as he grew up;'<sup>187</sup>

God, no doubt, was with Ishmael but the Israelites were against him simply because they habitually rebel against the Lord. It was the boy, for whom Abraham (pbAh) prayed: 'O that Ishmael (pbAh) might live before thee (Gen.17:18)', who grew up in the company of the Lord, in the vicinity of the ancient 'House of the Lord', i.e. 'the Ka'bah at Makkah'. He can, by no means, be

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<sup>185</sup> Gen. 16:4 KJV.

<sup>186</sup> Gen. 17:18 KJV.

<sup>187</sup> Gen. 21:20 GNB.

addressed with the *misnomer* of a 'slave' or 'an outcast'. It was the same house of the Lord towards the south from Canaan, towards which, knowingly or otherwise, the Israelites always faced while offering their sacrifices in the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:22-27, Leviticus 1:10-11). It may also be noted that while sacrificing animals the Israelites were required to face towards the house of the Lord. Hence, when they were required to stand on the north, they had to face southward. Even subsequently, when the temple was built by Solomon (pbAh) in Jerusalem, all sacrifices continued to be offered facing towards Ka'bah in the south. The temple rebuilt by Zerubbabel<sup>188</sup> and Herod<sup>189</sup>, also continued the same tradition of facing towards the south (where the Ka'bah stood) during all the services and especially the sacrifices in the

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<sup>188</sup> Zerubbabel was 'the head of the tribe of Judah at the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity in the first year of Cyrus. (...). He was appointed by the Persian king to the office of Governor of Judea. On arriving at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel's great work, which he set about immediately, was the rebuilding of the temple. (...). After much opposition and many hindrances and delays, the temple was at length finished, in the sixth year of Darius,' (W. Smith, *A Dic. of B*, 1984, p.763.). He managed to rebuild the Solomon's Temple, which was destroyed at the time of the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, in 586 BC. It was completed in almost 515 BC.

<sup>189</sup> The Second Temple or Zerubbabel's Temple had been damaged to great extent. Herod the Great announced in 20 or 19 BC His intention of restoring and rebuilding the temple. The task took more than half century and could be completed only a few years before its complete and final destruction at the hands of Titus in ca. AD 70.

temple. There are no cogent reasons to presume that the earlier prophets or the scholars among Israel were unaware of the logic of facing towards the south. We also cannot assume that they did not know that the sacrifices could be made while facing towards the house of the Lord. *Let us reiterate that up to the reign of King David (pbAh), there was no other house of the Lord except Ka'bah in Makkah*, which was towards the south from different parts of Canaan. As such, facing towards south meant facing towards the Ka'bah at Makkah. Therefore the only motive behind facing towards the south could be to face towards the Ka'bah at Makkah, and nothing else.

As such, instead of calling Hagar and Ishmael 'outcast' or 'slaves', they have to be recognized as the role model of the complete submission to the will of the Lord. It is a well-known fact that Ishmael (pbAh) along with his father reconstructed the ancient house of the Lord, and started the worship and sacrifice there. He established the first habitation near Ka'bah to facilitate the rest of the humankind to worship there. All this was performed and led by Abraham (pbAh) under the initiative, guidance, and supervision of Almighty Allah Himself. The people of the Book should also have followed the faith, religious practices, and rituals introduced by the Patriarch. The attempts of the scribes of the Bible cannot damage the actual status of Ishmael (pbAh), of being the first-born son of Abraham (pbAh).

No pretensions can change the facts. Ishmael enjoyed the exalted status of being the first participant in the Covenant of Circumcision made by the Lord with Abraham (pbAh). The Israelites continue to follow the

same rite of circumcision established by Abraham and Ishmael. In spite of all this, being obsessed with haughtiness, prejudice and hatred against the Ishmaelites, the Israelites have tried to repudiate the word of God existing in the OT till today. Alas! the Israelites never realized that the Covenant was the trust that God had reposed in them. They, however, failed to preserve the words of the Covenant and to transmit the uncorrupted message of the Lord to the people of the world. They occasionally concealed the facts, changed the commandments and distorted the text by inserting their own words into the Holy Writ. No wonder that the sanctifying grace as trustee of the Covenant was taken away from them and given to another people:

Jesus said unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.<sup>190</sup>

It was fulfilled in the person of Muhāammad (pbAh), the promised Prophet, like unto Moses (pbAh), raised among the brethren of the Israelites.<sup>191</sup> The Muslims, the Trustees of the New Covenant, have, by the grace of God, succeeded to preserve the word of God intact till today exactly as it was revealed to Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) and as dictated by him to the scribes. Hence, the words and the contents of the Qur'ān have remained unchanged during the last

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<sup>190</sup> Matt 21:42-43 KJV.

<sup>191</sup> See Deu 18: 15-18 KJV.

fourteen centuries, since the death of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) till today. There had neither been the slightest corruption in the text nor there exists any other version of the Qur'ān acceptable to the masses. It is due to preservation of the true teachings of Prophet Muhāmmad (pbAh) that the Muslims continue to worship one and the only Lord God worshipped by all the prophets since Adam (pbAh) to Muhāmmad (pbAh). The Muslims, therefore, stick to the dictum that *there is no object of worship except Allah and Muhāmmad (pbAh) is the Messenger of the Almighty*.

Then there is the Ka'bah around which all the sages of the old have been circumambulating seven times. At a furlong's distance from Ka'bah is the Mount Sāfā from which the pilgrims start Sa'y (jogging) towards Mount Marwah and back as per Hagar's tradition of running between the said mounts seven times in her search for someone who might have got some water to save Ishmael (pbAh) from the impending death. Zamzam is the true 'Well of Seven' (Beir-Sheba) persisting since the time of Abraham (pbAh), Ishmael and Hagar, and quenching the thirst of millions of the pilgrims from the time of Abraham (pbAh) till today. Zamzam is the only miraculous well in the world surviving as an immutable evidence towards the veracity of Hagar and Ishmael. Millions of people from Arabia and the entire world have been using this holy water while appreciating its highest quality and taste. Even today hundreds of thousands of pilgrims circumambulate the Ka'bah seven times and also run between Sāfā and Marwah seven times on each visit. The practice continues everyday throughout



the year to keep alive the traditions of Abraham, Ishmael and Hagar at Makkah. Is there any parallel to it anywhere in the world?

There are reasons to believe that Moses (pbAh) might also have gone for a pilgrimage to Ka'bah from Midian. The biblical literature has recorded the visit of Moses (pbAh) to Arabia. Similarly, there is strong evidence that King David (pbAh) too, had the pilgrimage of Makkah (Bacca), before the death of Saul; and he has given a vivid description of the house of the Lord, and has also shown his desire to go again to the pilgrimage of this 'the Lord's Temple'. He starts Psalm 84 with the following words:

How I love your Temple, Almighty God! How I want to be there! I long to be in the Lord's Temple.<sup>192</sup> (...). As they pass through the *valley of Baca*<sup>193</sup> [stress added] place of springs; the early rain fills it with pools. They grow stronger as they go<sup>194</sup>; they will see the God of gods on Zion.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Ps. 84:1-2 GNB. It is to be noted that there was no 'Lord's Temple' in the world by that time except the Ka'bah at Makkah.

<sup>193</sup> Every Arabic reading person knows that 'Baca' or 'Bakkah' is one of the ancient names of 'Makkah'; which is the only 'place of springs [the abundantly unlimited sprouting of waters out of the spring of Zamzam].

<sup>194</sup> Would that every reader of this book might have an opportunity of visiting the holy place and observe of himself the ever growing zeal and zest of the pilgrims leading their way to the Ka'bah!

<sup>195</sup> Psalms 84:6-7 GNB. *The Strong's Dic.* Has recorded its meanings as: 'to parch; aridity; concretely a desert, barren, dry land; wilderness; conspicuousness (entry 6723, 25, p. 99)'; which exactly indicates Makkah; and by no

It is worth-noting here that the word 'Zion'<sup>196</sup> seems to be a later insertion in the text. At the time of King David (pbAh) there was neither any temple at the Mount Zion, nor any other house of the Lord except the one at Makkah. As such, there was no question of any pilgrimage to mount Zion (Ps 84:5) which was then under the possession of the Jebusites. Jerusalem did not have the house of God completed or consecrated till the second part of the reign of King Solomon. This

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means Jerusalem, which is quite contrary the sense.

<sup>196</sup> The word 'Zion' needs to be studied in a fair detail in another perspective as well. Mr. Abdus Sattar Ghauri explains it in his book '*The Only Son Offered for Sacrifice: Isaac or Ishmael?*, 2008' (p.137):

As regards its meanings, *Enc. Biblica* (4:5421) observes:

Various explanations of the name have been given. Gesenius (*Thes.* 1164) and Lagarde (*Ubers.* 84. n) derive from [a Heb. word meaning] 'to be dry' (...) Wetzstein derives from 'to protect' so that the name would mean 'arx, citadel'; cp Zin.

Interpreter's Dic. of the Bible explains:

The etymology of the name is uncertain. It may be related to the Hebrew (sayon), 'dry place' 'parched ground' (Isa. 25:5; 32:2).'

It would be appreciated that 'dry place' or 'parched ground' can only be applied to arid, barren, and sterile land of 'Makkah'. It can by no means be applied to the verdant and fertile land of 'Jerusalem'.

Like other Bible names 'Zion' may also have more than one significations. There may have been a 'Zion' of Makkah and the other of Jerusalem. But in the sense of 'dry place,' or 'parched ground' it can only be applied to 'Makkah' in the present context. It is not possible for the writer of this book to dilate upon this theme here. It may, however, be noted that the implication of the Zion of Jerusalem is to be ruled out due to the fact that there did not exist any sanctuary at Jerusalem at that time. (A S Ghauri, p. 137).

suggests that 'Zion' is a spurious addition pertaining to the period much after the construction of the temple by King Solomon (pbAh) at Jerusalem. Prior to that Moses (pbAh) and all other prophets of Israel have been facing towards Ka'bah, the ancient house of the Lord at Makkah, while worshiping the Lord in the wilderness or subsequently in different cities of Palestine. Hence, Ka'bah was the house of the Lord in the valley of Bakka which was another pronunciation of Makkah. God has clearly confirmed the sanctity as the first and the ancient house of the Lord for all the human beings.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ.<sup>197</sup>

The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka: Full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings.

**3)** That Hagar was not a slave to anyone is also evident from the name 'Hagar' (هاجر) assigned to her. She got that appellation because she opted to leave her royal palace in Egypt to serve the great prophet to please the Lord. She became 'Hagar' again when she submitted to the commandment of the Lord, and left her home as well as her husband at Canaan to serve at the ancient house of the Lord at Makkah. For this purpose, she had to live all alone near Ka'bah along with her suckling child in the wilderness. The word 'Hagar' essentially means 'the one who has himself or herself opted to leave his or her nativity for some distant land.' As slaves have no free will so they cannot perform a migration of their own accord, and

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<sup>197</sup> Al-Qur'ān 3:96.

, as such, they cannot be called 'a hagar', even if they be transported to any far off place in the world. 'Hagar' must, therefore, be a free person who takes independent decision and remains Hagar only as long as he or she is free to decide for himself/herself. History shows that Hagar and all her descendants through Ishmael (pbAh) maintained their sovereignty at the Arabian Peninsula, and the Ishmaelites were never subjugated by any other nation in the world. They were the masters of their own fate and always enjoyed sheikhdом over vast areas of Arabia that exceeded one million square miles in the ancient past. After the advent of Islam, they have always been ruling over major parts of the Middle East, and their power and prestige is likely to increase in future.

**4)** It may also be noted that according to the custom during the time of the patriarch, a slave wife on expulsion from the house of the master would enjoy complete freedom thereafter. As such, even if Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) were cast out as alleged by the Genesis, they were free as soon as they departed from the house of Abraham (pbAh). Any blame of slavery, thereafter, is just a false allegation and the production of a perverted mind. History of the Arabs repudiates any charges of slavery against the Ishmaelites.

**5)** Lastly, even if it be supposed that Hagar was a slave to Sarai, Ishmael (pbAh) being her son could not be a slave. Abraham (pbAh) had married Hagar<sup>198</sup> to

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<sup>198</sup> 'So it was that Hagar, an Egyptian princess, became Abraham's wife and bore him Ishmael' (*Midrash: Rashi*, as quoted by) *Chumash*, p. 71.

get a heir and not to get a slave merely to increase the existing number of his slaves:

And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael'.<sup>199</sup>

Having no son till his old age Abraham (pbAh) had been praying to the Lord for the grant of a heir<sup>200</sup> and the same was granted in the shape of Ishmael (pbAh) which means 'God has heard'. The very name Ishmael (pbAh) suggested by the Lord himself contains an ineradicable evidence to the fact that God had heard the prayer of Abraham (pbAh), while Ishmael, the son of Hagar, was the par excellence response to the said prayers of Abraham (pbAh). Ishmael was, therefore, admittedly the first born of Abraham (pbAh), e.g:

Ishmael was the first-born of his father<sup>201</sup>

God also confirmed that he was the genuine son and the seed of Abraham (pbAh):

And Abraham took *Ishmael his son* [stress added], (...); and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.<sup>202</sup>

And *Ishmael his son* was thirteen years old, when

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<sup>199</sup> Gen 16:15 KJV.

<sup>200</sup> Gen. 15:3, 4, 6 KJV observes:

And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. (...). And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

<sup>201</sup> *A Dic. of the Bible*, W. Smith, 1967, p. 268.

<sup>202</sup> Gen. 17:23 KJV.

he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.<sup>203</sup>

And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.<sup>204</sup>

Perhaps, among all the nations of the world, only the Israelites could dare controvert the Word of God extant in the OT till today. The allegation of slavery is, therefore, a forgery of the Israelites based on their prejudice against the Ishmaelites. They knew full-well that Jacob (pbAh) had married Bilha, the slave of Rachel, who gave birth to Dan and Nepthali, two sons of Jacob. Similarly, another two sons of Jacob (pbAh), i.e. Gad and Asher were born from Zilpha, the slave of Leah, the first wife of Jacob. These four sons of Jacob always enjoyed privileges and status equal to other eight sons of Jacob. Hence, four out of the twelve tribes of the Israelites were named Dan, Nepthali, Gad and Asher being the descendants of those four sons of Jacob (pbAh). No one could, therefore, think that Bilha or Zilpha were giving birth to their children in slavery. It occurred only to St. Paul to attempt blemishing the glorious figure of Hagar by ill-conceived ideas about her as we find recorded in his Epistles.<sup>205</sup>

The Bible has categorically described that Ishmael (pbAh) will get 12 princes whose progeny will be made a great nation in the world. In the words of the Bible:

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and

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<sup>203</sup> Gen. 17:25 KJV.

<sup>204</sup> Gen. 21-13 KJV.

<sup>205</sup> Galatians 4:24f. KJV.

will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.<sup>206</sup>

Princes are always born of the kings or the queens and not of slaves or slave girls. Almighty God has categorically and unequivocally declared that 'twelve princes shall he [Ishmael] beget'. There can also be no denial of the fact that princes are begotten only by a king and not a slave. Hence God's verdict declaring sons of Ishmael as 12 princes automatically confers the status of a king on him and he factually enjoyed the said prestige in Hejaz. With the foregoing in mind, no one except the openly rebellious people can afford to controvert the verdict of God by labeling Ishmael and his progeny as born in slavery. Hagar was in fact a princess, and God Himself confirmed her nobility by giving her the good news of 12 princes from her son Ishmael. It is said in the East: if someone tries to spit on the sun; it shall fall on his own face. It is now unto the just and rightful readers to decide, whose version would they like to accept: God's or the Israelites?

أَللّٰهُمَّ أَرِنَا الْحَقَّ حَقًّا وَارْزُقْنَا إِتِبَاعَهُ وَأَرِنَا الْبَاطِلَ بَاطِلًا وَارْزُقْنَا إِجْتِنَابَهُ.

O God show us the rightness of that which is right, and bestow upon us the vigour and courage to follow it; and show us the wrongfulness of that which is wrong, and bestow upon us the vigour and courage to avoid and keep away of it. Amen!

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<sup>206</sup> Gen 17:20 KJV.

## Chapter-11

### HAGAR, THE PRINCESS, AND HER EMBRACING THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM (PBAH)

To determine the true status of Hagar, it is imperative that the circumstances at the time when Abraham (pbAh) entered Egypt be reviewed. The first theme to be explored is the personality of Abraham (pbAh) himself. It has been stated that:

Even in physical size he [Abraham] towered above the rest of men, according to Gen. R. xlix, and Soferim xxi.9 (...). Abraham's singularly majestic and attractive personality, as it appears in Genesis, is in this view the outcome of generations of thought. Each age contributed to the portrait of what is held to be purest and noblest and worthiest of the first forefather. The result is a figure, solitary, calm, strong, resting unswervingly on God. And moving unscathed<sup>207</sup> among men. Later he was thought of as 'the friend of God'.<sup>208</sup>

Shakespeare in his play '*King Lear*' had put the following words in the mouth of the Duke of Kent:

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<sup>207</sup> 'unscathed' means 'unhurt'.

<sup>208</sup> *The Jewish Enc.* (NY: KTAV Publ. House Inc.), 1:87, 90.



No Sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.<sup>209</sup>

A man of such caliber and traits, as Abraham (pbAh) was, can only be called 'master'. Abraham was of a captivating, commanding, convincing, and attracting personality. Abraham (pbAh) must be of a graceful and impressive posture even at the age of 85. It can thus be safely understood that the king and his intelligent courtiers must have been impressed by the sagacity, knowledge, and majestic appearance of Abraham, coupled with his eloquence in expressing his faith and his powerfully argumentative preaching for the worship of the single Creator of the universe. Almighty God also supported him with some miracles, in addition to his extraordinarily participating miraculous speech and sound to convince the Egyptians that he was His true prophet. Being a lady of caliber, the Princess Hagar might also have been attending her father's court. She would definitely have been impressed by the towering personality, majestic performance, and captivating eloquence of the stranger. Discerning the signs of truth, force of argumentation, spiritual superiority, moral grace, and the sagacity of the princely person, she might herself have embraced the faith whose veracity

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<sup>209</sup> 'King Lear' is one of the great tragedies of Shakespeare. King Lear, flattered by his two hypocrite daughters, handed over his kingdom to them. They betrayed him and deprived him of his authority and the train of his servants. Duke of Kent a faithful friend of King Lear, foreseeing the coming bad days of the king, entered in his service in disguise. When the king asked him why he wanted to serve him and 'dost thou know me, fellow?', he uttered these words. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act:1; 4: 29,30.

was so obviously established; and might have decided to avail some opportunity of being under his rearing and mentorship. The king, having observed the miracles of the family and inclination of Hagar to accept the faith of Abraham (pbAh), might have allowed her to serve the Prophet. In the *com.* to Ch. 16, *The Chumash* has categorically reported:

Hagar was a daughter of Pharaoh. (...). 'Better that she be a servant in their house than a princess in someone else's.' So it was that Hagar, an Egyptian princess, became Abraham's wife and bore him Ishmael (*Midrash; Rashi*).<sup>210</sup>

Qādī Muhāmmad Sulaymān Mansūrpurī reports:

It is better for my daughter to be a servant to Abraham (pbAh) than to be a princess elsewhere.<sup>211</sup>

*The Jewish Enc.* has also recorded the same views:

—In Rabbinical Literature:

According to the Midrash (Gen. R. xlv.), *Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh* [stress added], who, seeing what great miracles God had done for Sarah's sake (Gen. xii. 17), said: '*It is better for Hagar to be a slave in Sarah's house than mistress in her own.*' In this sense Hagar's name is interpreted as 'reward' ('Ha-Agar' = 'this is reward'). She was at first reluctant when Sarah desired her to marry Abraham, and although Sarah had full authority over her as her handmaid, she persuaded her, saying. 'Consider thyself happy to be united with this saint.' *Hagar is*

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<sup>210</sup> *The Chumash*, ed. Rabbi Nosson Scherman, 2007, p. 71.

<sup>211</sup> Rabbi Shlomo Isaac, *Com. of the Bible*, as quoted by Qādī Muhāmmad Sulaymān Mansūrpurī in his Urdu *magnum opus Rahmatul-lil 'Ālamīn*, 1:22.

*held up as an example of the high degree of godliness prevalent in Abraham's time* [stress added], for while Manoah<sup>212</sup> was afraid that he would die because he had seen an angel of God (Judges xiii. 22), Hagar was not frightened by the sight of the divine messenger (Gen. R. l.c.). Her fidelity is praised, for even after Abraham sent her away she kept her marriage vow, and therefore she was identified with Keturah (Gen. xxv. 1), with allusion to קטר (Aramaic, 'to tie'; Gen. R. lxi.). Another explanation of the same name is "to adorn," because *she was adorned with piety and good deeds* [stress added] (l.c.).<sup>213</sup>

Under the sub heading, 'Critical view', it observes:

While the two narratives, Gen Xvi and Xxi, 9-21, are not directly contradictory, the critical school, pointing to the fact that in both instances Hagar is expelled upon Sara's request and with the reluctant assent of Abraham, and that in both instances she receives, while sitting by a fountain, a divine message foretelling the great destiny of her son, finds in these narratives two parallel accounts of the origin of the *Bedouins, whose racial affinity with the Israelites the latter had to admit, while degrading them by tracing their origin to a concubine of their common ancestor.* Accordingly the name 'Hagar' is

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<sup>212</sup> 'Manoah' [was] the father of judge Samson; a Danite, native of the town of Zorah. (W. Smith, *Dic. of the Bible*, p.379). *Aid to Bible Understanding* 2:1105 writes:

He was a devout worshipper of Jehovah. One day an angel appeared to Manoah's barren wife, announcing that she would give birth to a son, Samson who would be a Nazirite of God. Years later, Manoah and his wife 'not knowing that it was from Jehovah,' objected to Samson's desire to marry a Philistine woman of Timnah. Manoah preceded his son in death.

<sup>213</sup> *The Jewish Enc.* 6:138, s.v. 'Hagar'.

*explained as 'the fugitive' from the Arabic 'hajar' (to flee) [stress added].*<sup>214</sup>

Due to the deep rooted and ancient inferiority complex lurking in the minds of the Israelites, they contrive to transfer the stigma of slavery or inferiority from the Israelites to all other nations around them. Hence, they try to show all other people as inferior to them or as slaves of Israel. It is, therefore, the reflection of the same obsession that the Israelites have ventilated their reaction by distorting the facts to degrade the Ishmaelites. The same has been the motive of the Israelites behind tracing the origin of the Ishmaelites to a concubine of Abraham (pbAh) than admitting her true status as a princess of Egypt and venerable wife of the Patriarch.

*The Jewish Enc.* has also asserted (under the sub heading 'In Arabic Literature'):

According to the Midrash (Gen. R. xiv), Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh, who presented her to Abraham.<sup>215</sup>

It can thus be appreciated that the Israelites were not ignorant about the true background of Hagar. Her social status as a princess was, therefore, an admitted fact. *The Chumash* further asserts:

Despite her many years in the home of Abraham and Sarah, *Hagar remained an Egyptian princess*, and Ishmael gravitated to her influence rather than Abraham's.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> *The Jewish Enc.*, 6:139, s.v. 'Hagar'.

<sup>215</sup> *The Jewish Enc.*, 6:139, s.v. 'Hagar'.

<sup>216</sup> *The Chumash*, p. 96 (Commenting on Gen. 21:9-14).

*Enc. Judaica* explains under 'In the Aggadah'

Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh. When Pharaoh saw the deeds performed on Sarah's behalf in his house, he gave Hagar to Sarah, saying 'better let my daughter be a handmaid in this house than a mistress in another's' (Gen R. 45:1). According to Philo (Abr. 251), Sarah testified about Hagar her handmaid also that she was a free woman of noble disposition, but also that she was a Hebrew in her way of life. Hagar was given to Abraham after he had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan (Gen 16:3). Since a man having no children from his wife for ten years may not abstain any longer from the duty of propagation (Yev.6:6).<sup>217</sup>

The evidence in favour of the fact that 'Hagar was a princess and the daughter of the king of Egypt and could, by no means, have been a slave girl of Sarah' is obviously and convincingly sound. Sir Sayyid writes:

A debate was held among the Muslims and the Jews in Calcutta (India) in AD 1850 [during the British Raj] regarding this matter; and most of the Jews were obliged to accept [the view point of the Muslims] that *Hagar was the daughter of the king of Egypt and had never been a slave girl*.<sup>218</sup>

It has been substantiated in the above pages that Hagar was a princess of the royal house of Egypt. The king being impressed by the towering personality and the nobility and godliness of the family, desired that his daughter be reared in the family. As a token of respect he asked his daughter to serve the family as

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<sup>217</sup> *Enc. Judaica* 2nd Edition, s.v. 'Hagar', 8:206.

<sup>218</sup> *Maqālāt-e-Sir Syed*, ed. Muhammad Ismā'il Pānīpatī (Lahore: Majlis-e-Taraqqī-e-Adab, 1963), p. 203-4.

the pupils served their educators in the Oriental society of the time. But it does not mean that she had lost her status and position of a princess.

Even if it be supposed that Hagar was a slave girl as alleged by the Israelites, her social status must have changed from the moment Abraham (pbAh) took her as his wife. And subsequent to the birth of Ishmael, the first-born of Abraham (pbAh), Hagar must have enjoyed a status equal to, or perhaps even superior to that of Sarah's.

As to her becoming the mother of Abraham's first born son a *Com.* on the contents of Gen. 16 notes:

Despite their spiritual riches and Godly assurances, Abraham and Sarah were still heartbroken at their barrenness, for without heirs they would not be able to continue the mission of bringing God's teachings to mankind. Recognizing that it was she who was infertile, Sarah suggested that Abraham marry her maidservant Hagar, and, if a son were born, Sarah would raise him, so that he would be considered her adopted child.<sup>219</sup>

Affording an apology to the so called treatment of Sarah towards Hagar, Rabbi Aryeh Levin asserts:

(...), Sarah treated Hagar as she always had, but in the light of Hagar's newly inflated self-image, she took it as persecution.<sup>220</sup>

Another comment under Gen. 21:9-14 is also of some

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<sup>219</sup>. *The Chumash*, ed. Rabbi Nosson Scerman (NY: Mesorah Publishing Ltd, a project of the Mesorah Heritage Foundation, 2007), 71.

<sup>220</sup> *The Chumash*, p. 71.

interest here:

To signify Ishmael's gross nature, the Torah describes him a son of Hagar, the Egyptian. Despite her many years in the home of Abraham *and* Sarah, Hagar remained an Egyptian Princess and Ishmael gravitated to her influence rather than Abraham's.<sup>221</sup>

He confirms it under Gen. 30:20 as follows:

Proximity to a Tzaddik has always been a goal of people who are attuned to spiritual values. As sages taught, even Pharaoh sent his daughter Hagar to be a mere maidservant in the home of Abraham and Sarah because he valued their sanctity.<sup>222</sup>

It would thus be concluded from the above study that Hagar was the daughter of Pharaoh and a princess of the royal house of the pharaohs of Egypt and she herself and her father, the king, preferred the godliness over the worldly comforts and prestige. The Israelites, however, have always tried to profess that anybody who is their enemy or who does not belong to Israel, is inferior to them or a slave of Israel. That is why the Israelites attribute slavery to Hagar for disgrace. But the self-concocted story about the slavery of Hagar cannot eradicate the age-long deep-rooted 'anguish of slavery' from the subconscious mind of Israel, although they continue to pretend that all nations in the world were the slaves of the Israelites.

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<sup>221</sup> *The Chumash*, p.96.

<sup>222</sup> *The Chumash* (NY: Mesorah Publ'n. Ltd., 2007), p.157.

## *Abraham Equates the Social Status of Hagar and Sarai*

Generally speaking Hagar was by no means inferior to Sarah. She was rather superior to Sarah in so many aspects:

- (a) She was young and smart;
- (b) She was sexually fit, fertile, and attractive;
- (c) She was a princess of the highest royal stock of the time, being the daughter of the king of Egypt; and
- (d) She was the mother queen and the first lady due to being the mother of the 'Crown Prince' and the 'First-Born' of Abraham (pbAh).

As to her demeanour, she was polite, docile, well-behaved, adjusting and righteous with a zeal to learn and acquire righteousness.

On the other hand, in the light of the Biblical account, Sarah was spiteful, ill-tempered, proud, jealous, unjustly selfish, avaricious, and malicious; old, barren, and sexually cold and unattractive.

As such, Hagar excelled Sarah according to all the standards of superiority, comeliness, and grace. There were genuine reasons for Abraham (pbAh) to prefer Hagar to Sarah. But he was a just, fair-minded, and considerate person. He behaved so well, and extended so respect towards Sarah that she could not perceive any cause of complaint against him. He rather started to address her with the name of Sarah, which meant a princess (Gen. 17:15), instead of her original name Sarai, so that Sarah might not develop some inferiority complex due to royal background of Hagar.



To call Hagar a slave girl is, subsequently, a clear-cut and intentional repudiation of the verdict of God. Since the Israelites have always been serving their own interest instead of submitting to the will of the Lord, therefore, they very often rebelled against the prophets and the Lord. Even the Bible has depicted them as a stubborn nation violating the commandments of the Lord again and again. We can, therefore, conclude that the Israelites targeted Hagar and addressed her with the misnomer of a slave girl following the general policy adopted by them to lower the social status of the Ishmaelites in the same way as they did with other nations around them. Such futile efforts on the part of the Israelites could neither stop the advent of the Promised Prophet in the Ishmaelites nor could they frustrate the design of the Lord to make them (Ishmaelites) the rulers of the greatest empires ever established on the planet Earth. On the other hand, God also did not leave Israelites unpunished for their misdeeds, rebellion and distortion in the revelation from the Lord as well. history provides ample evidence of the slavery, subjugation and calamities inflicted on Israel through the ages in the past, and it is likely to continue as long as they do not submit to the will of the Lord.

The atrocities and unjust maltreatment of the Israeli state towards the Palestinians provide a justification for the impending havoc of this cruel state.

## SAYYIDAH HĀJIRAH: THE MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS

Hagar of Hebrew is, in fact 'Hājirah' (هاجره) in Arabic, meaning 'a stranger'. She originally belonged to Egypt. Even when Hagar was sent to Paran, i.e. valley of Makkah, the name Hagar (i.e. departed person) or Hājirah of Arabic (i.e. alien or the one having migrated from some other place) was equally applicable to her. The noble lady perhaps liked the appellation and gradually it got such a popularity that her real name vanished forever under the new title. In religious terminology, 'Hājir' or 'Muhājir' is one who leaves his/her homeland in the path of Allah.

Abraham (pbAh) himself was a muhājir (migrant) as he performed hijrah (migration) twice: firstly, from Ur to Haran; and secondly, from Haran to Canaan. Lot (pbAh) and Sarah accompanied him in both of his hijrahs. All people rejected him except Lot (pbAh) who accepted the faith. The Qur'ān describes the episode in the following words:

فَأَمَّنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Al-Qur'ān 29:26.

And Lūṭؑ believed in Him, and he said: I am fleeing to my Lord, surely He is the Mighty, the Wise.

Hagar is, in true sense of the word, Hagar/muhājir (a migrant). Once again she left her husband, her house and everything else in Canaan to go to the wilderness of Paran (Makkah) in compliance to her husband. *She has the privilege of reposing utmost trust in Allah, and lived all alone in the vicinity of the ancient house of Allah along with her suckling child.* Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) had the unique privilege to be buried in 'Hṭatīm' which is actually part of the Ka'bah.

After Abraham (pbAh) and Hagar, Prophet Lot (pbAh) was the first 'Muhajir' who, subsequent to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, shifted to the east of Canaan and also perhaps sojourned in Syria. He went to all those places for the cause of the Lord and under guidance from Him. About 2500 years after him, Prophet Muḥammad (pbAh) and his companions were compelled to leave Makkah for Madīnah for the cause of Allah. It shows that leaving one's home for a distant place in the way of Allah, is a unique honour and the tradition of Abraham (pbAh), Hagar, and Prophet Lot (pbAh) which was revived by the Prophet Muḥammad (pbAh) along with his companions about 2500 years after the Hijrah of Abraham (pbAh) and Hagar.

Sayyidah Hājirah was one of the ideal ladies of the world. Ever since she was acquainted to Abraham (pbAh), her life was a life of continuous devotion, piety and sacrifice till her death. It was for the cause of Allah that she willingly opted for sacrificing her royal heritage, worldly comforts and her glorious future as

a would-be queen at the palace of some king. Hājirah consciously volunteered to forgo the aforesaid prestige, power and the privilege at some palace only to earn the pleasure of the Lord of the universe.

Hagar's decision to serve Abraham (pbAh) was neither prompted by some commandment from the Lord nor was it incited by any foretold blessings or promise such as numerous descendants, to possess the entire land of Canaan forever in the manner the Genesis reports regarding Abraham (pbAh)<sup>224</sup>. Hagar was, therefore, a true devotee of the Lord. She faithfully surrendered her will to the will of the Lord and sacrificed everything in the way of God with full faith that Allah would never disappoint her during her life on earth as well as in the hereafter. The only goal of Hājirah in life was to earn the pleasure of the Lord for which she renounced everything firstly in Egypt to serve Abraham (pbAh), the Friend of God and secondly when after the birth and dedication of Ishmael (pbAh), Hājirah did not hesitate to depart from her husband, her house and everything else at Canaan to go to Makkah along with her suckling child only on the call of Allah. She, therefore, offered her *self-sacrifice* along with the infant Ishmael (pbAh) by shifting to the wilderness of Paran (valley of Makkah) which was about one thousand kilometer away from her home in Canaan. With her suckling child, she had to stay there in the open; all alone at the place near Ka'bah without there being any shelter whatsoever. She had scanty provisions of water and food sufficient only for

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<sup>224</sup> Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-18.

3-4 days, but the *unwavering trust in the Lord was the only asset to sustain her through the ordeal*. Such was the unparalleled devotion and trust of Hagar in the Lord that made her a beacon of faith for all the believers in the world.

Sayyidah Hājira had again the unique honor of willingly and unflinchingly offering her only son Ishmael (pbAh) for sacrifice; while she was living in the wilderness all by herself without there being any shelter from the vagaries of nature or any protection against wildlife, brigands, or the bandits. She was fully aware of the fact that after the sacrifice of Ishmael, she would be left alone to face all types of hazards. Her wholehearted submission to the will of the Lord is exemplary.

The Believers hold her in great esteem due her great attributes. Although the Jews and the Christians labeled her with false allegations of slavery and a cast out, yet the Lord exalted her. Even the biased writers of the *Genesis* could not mark her with any moral defilement. She turned out blameless, even at the hands of the Israelites. The piety, the nobility, and the devotedness of Hagar are par-excellence and without a parallel. Salām on her! From all the believers in the world and billions of blessings from Almighty Allah be on her increasingly and incessantly for all times to come. Amen!

## GOD SHALL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS ABRAHAM:

IT IS ONLY THE MUSLIMS WHO BLESS HIM DAILY  
(AND NOT THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIANS)

The Bible has depicted Abraham (pbAh) as:

- i) Telling lies<sup>225</sup>;
- ii) Deceiving Pharaoh of Egypt<sup>226</sup> and king Abimelech of Gerar<sup>227</sup>;

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<sup>225</sup> Gen 12:3,16,-19; 20:2,9-18, KJV.

<sup>226</sup> How unbecoming and deceptive conduct of Abraham (pbAh) has been depicted in these verses of the Bible:

Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. (...). And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What *is* this *that* thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she *was* thy wife? Why saidst thou, She *is* my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take *her*, and go thy way (Gen 12:3,16,-19 KJV).

<sup>227</sup> It is recorded in the Bible:

iii) Amassing wealth at the cost of the chastity of his faithful and pious wife, Sarah: he seems to be willing to exchange his wife for sheep, goats, slaves and gold etc without any prick of conscience<sup>228</sup>.

iv) Thankless and distrustful to God<sup>229</sup>; and

v) Ruthlessly doing injustice to Hagar his wife and

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And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She *is* my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. (...). Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? And Abraham said, Because I thought, (...) they will slay me for my wife's sake. (...) I said unto her, This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother. And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. (...) For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife [But for Abimelech's what sin? Are God's acts so inappropriate, improper and prejudicial as to award so severe punishment to someone for no fault of his?] (Gen 20:2,9-18).

<sup>228</sup> Gen 12:3-19; 20:2-18 KJV.

<sup>229</sup> The Bible shows that Abraham (pbAh) was thanklessly complaining against God and distrustful to Him:

And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir (Gen 15:2-4 KJV).

Whereas God had already promised him:

And I will make of thee a great nation [which clearly indicates the promise of a son through which he would become 'a great nation'], and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; (Gen 12:2 KJV).

Ishmael his first born son, given to him by the Lord in response to his life long prayers.<sup>230</sup>

Obviously, instead of proving Abraham (pbAh) a

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<sup>230</sup> With complete disregard to his duty towards his wife, Hagar, who was going to be the mother of his first born son, he puts her at the disposal of her rival, Sarah, to become the object of her ruthless and harsh treatment:

But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid *is* in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face (Gen 16:6).

And the child [Isaac] grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the *same* day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking [it be noted here that the actual Heb. Word, here, is 'קנצ' (sqh□q) in Arabic d□h□k, which, according to *Strong's Dic. of the Heb. Bible*, means: 'to laugh outright (in merriment or scorn); by impl. to sport, laugh, mock, play, make sport (entry 6711; p. 99)'. Douay, Rheim Bible, GNB, and so many other Versions have translated the word 'mocking' as 'playing' and others as 'sporting', or 'laughing' etc]. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son [Is 'playing', 'laughing', 'sporting', or even 'mocking' such a heinous offence as to call for a retribution with kicking out of one's home, which is tantamount to sure death in the oblivious desolation of some desert]: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac [Is it justifiable for Abraham to deprive his genuine and legitimate first born son of the lawful share of inheritance]. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he *is* thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave *it* unto Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba (Gen 8-21:14 KJV).



blessing and a paragon of virtue, the Israelites have blemished him with most contemptible immoralities. They, therefore, did not make the name of Abraham (pbAh) great as promised by the Lord:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.<sup>231</sup>

The words of God: 'I will bless thee and make thy name great that thou shall be a blessing' have been rendered by the *Good News Bible* as '(...) or all the nations will ask me to bless them as I have blessed you.'

It is only the Muslim nations, the world over, who bless Abraham (pbAh) several times a day during their five-time daily prayers in the following words:

أَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اَنْكَ جَمِيْدٌ مُّجِيْدٌ- اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اَنْكَ جَمِيْدٌ مُّجِيْدٌ

O Allah, exalt Muhāammad (pbAh) and the followers of Muhāammad (pbAh), as You did exalt Ibrahim (pbAh) and his followers: You are the Praised, the Glorious. O Allah, bless Muhāammad (pbAh) and his followers, as You have blessed Ibrahim (pbAh) and his followers: You are the Praised, the Glorious."

In addition to their obligation to bless Abraham (pbAh) and seek blessings in the way God had blessed him nine times daily during their mandatory prayers to be

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<sup>231</sup> Gen 12:2-3 KJV.

offered at five different *times everyday*, the Muslims *throughout the world* are also used to bless him and seek blessings in the way God had blessed him many times a day during their optional/additional prayers and at various other occasions when and where they find an opportunity for the same. Some of them even chant these words on a rosary for hundreds of times daily, as advised by Prophet Muhammad (pbAh). A traveler in the Arabian countries is likely to come across Muslim Arabs chanting very often the Arabic words blessing Abraham (pbAh) occasionally and to beseech the blessing of the Lord for Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) and for themselves. This practice of the Muslims is, as such, the true fulfillment of Gen 12:3.

## The Jews and the Christians

### Do Not Bless Abraham (pbAh)

It is only the Muslims who bless Abraham (pbAh) day and night and receive blessings of the Lord as promised by Him.

Almost every knowledgeable person knows that Ka'bah at Makkah was built by Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh). The Muslims throughout the world face towards Ka'bah while offering their prayers in which they seek blessings of the Lord in the same way as Abraham (pbAh) was blessed. In addition to the mandatory prayers, the Muslims bless Abraham (pbAh) exceedingly because they are enjoined to implore the Almighty for His blessings on Abraham (pbAh), Muhammad (pbAh) and their followers. So far as the Jews are concerned, they instead of blessing

Abraham (pbAh), tarnish the luminous figure of the patriarch. In spite of this, they claim the entire inheritance of the material wealth, the land and other blessings on the pretension that they are the only legitimate descendants of Abraham (pbAh).

The Evangelists attach little importance to Abraham (pbAh). Mark has mentioned him only once as quoted below:

And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?<sup>232</sup>

**Matthew** has mentioned Abraham (pbAh) about seven times, but the first three references pertain to genealogy only. The fourth reference pertains to Jesus' reply to the Israelites:

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.<sup>233</sup>

Subsequently, we find Jesus (pbAh) eulogizing the faith of the pagan centurion as under:

And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham (pbAh), and Isaac (pbAh), and Jacob (pbAh), in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>234</sup>

In another reference, Jesus (pbAh) says:-

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<sup>232</sup> Mark 12:26 KJV.

<sup>233</sup> Mat 3:9 KJV.

<sup>234</sup> Mat 8:11

**31.** But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, **32.** I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.<sup>235</sup>

**Luke** has mentioned Abraham (pbAh) about 15 times but being the disciple of St. Paul he has stressed more on proving Jesus (pbAh) as the mighty savior (Luke 1:69) and prophet of the most high God. (Luke 1:76). Anyhow, he records about Abraham (pbAh) that:

The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, (...). That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,<sup>236</sup>

Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.<sup>237</sup>

Another reference of Luke pertains to the story of a rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Although Luke has acknowledged the sacred covenant of God with Abraham (pbAh) yet he exalts Jesus (pbAh) over him.

**John**, too, has mentioned Abraham (pbAh) about eight times. To a question of the Jews 'you do not claim to be greater than Abraham (pbAh), do you?' he records a longer reply from Jesus (pbAh):

<sup>56</sup>Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and

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<sup>235</sup> Mat 22:31-32

<sup>236</sup> Luke 1:73-74

<sup>237</sup> Luke 3:8

he saw it, and was glad. <sup>57</sup>Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? <sup>58</sup>Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Before Abraham was, I am.*<sup>238</sup>

The words '*before Abraham (pbAh) was, I am*' dwarf or belittle Abraham (pbAh) as compared to the exalted position of Jesus (pbAh). Hence, John, instead of blessing Abraham (pbAh), has actually deprecated him only to magnify or glorify the figure of Jesus Christ (pbAh).

**St. Paul** was, perhaps, the first person in the world to suggest spiritual inferiority of Abraham (pbAh) as compared to Melchizedek. He did so only to fulfill the requirements of the new theology being developed by him. Since the theory of Salvation as propounded by St. Paul was far apart from the faith of Abraham (pbAh), Moses (pbAh) and Aaron (pbAh), therefore, he attempted to undermine the spiritual importance of the said founders of faith as compared to Melchizedek and Jesus Christ (pbAh).

Both Abraham (pbAh) and Moses (pbAh) had been acknowledged as historical figures. The OT also has a detailed account of the life, background and history of the Israelites under the leadership of Moses (pbAh), including the formalization of the covenant and all the details of the Law; and the resistance faced by him to promulgate the said law. The story records experiments of Moses with the Israelites till the death of Moses (pbAh) and Aaron (pbAh). Although the OT fails to provide any credible life sketch and teachings of faith of Abraham (pbAh), yet it assigns him the

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<sup>238</sup> John 8:56-58

position of nobility as the patriarch, a blessing for his descendants and as a founder of faith prior to the advent of Moses (pbAh). As compared to the OT, the Qur'ān and the traditions of Prophet Muḥammad (pbAh) provided reliable and elaborate details of faith, teachings and essential events of the life and works of Abraham (pbAh), which serve as role model of piety and righteousness for the believers.

The OT counts Abraham (pbAh) as an important person mainly due to being the patriarch of the Israelites. Moses (pbAh), however, is the dominant figure in the Jewish scripture which have preserved reliable account of the life, the teaching and the details of the law. No other ancient personality has been discussed so thoroughly in the OT or in the Qur'ān as Moses (pbAh), who is the great lawgiver among the prophets. His teachings have, therefore, been rehearsed by all the prophets throughout the succeeding generations of the Israelites. All of them, including Jesus (pbAh) himself, endorsed the law and the teachings of Moses (pbAh). The Qur'ān too has discussed Moses (pbAh) much more than any other prophet of the Lord. In spite of all this, the Qur'ān did not say a single word about Melchisedek, his faith or his high-priesthood. It shows that according to the Qur'ān, Melchisedek had no relevant, permanent, or prominent role in the history of the revealed religions.







## MELCHISEDEK: A NEW FIND IN FAITH

As against Abraham (pbAh), Moses (pbAh) and other prophets, Melchizedek has been introduced only once in the Pentateuch in Gen 14:18-19 by some anonymous writer of Genesis who perhaps utilized some legend of the old to add sanctity and credibility to Abraham's heroic act of defeating four kings and showing his magnanimity by refusing to take anything from the king of Sodom out of the loot recovered from the four kings defeated by Abraham (Gen 14:1-26). In this respect, we have already discussed that Genesis cannot be treated as an authentic document due to the fact that Moses' authorship of Genesis is doubtful. Instead of Moses (pbAh), it is a composite of so many sources involved in its composition during various times of the history of Israel. It contains sources such as J<sup>239</sup>, E<sup>240</sup> & P<sup>241</sup> or L (Lay source), J E & P as basic

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<sup>239</sup> D. N. Freedman explains 'J' in *The Interpreter's Dic of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, USA, 1990), 2:777 as:

[ 'J', i.e. Jehovist, is] One of the principal narrative sources or strata of the PENTATEUCH. The symbol is derived from the personal name of God, Jehova or more accurately, Yahweh from יהוה, the use of which is characteristic of this source. It is commonly regarded as Judahite in origin, and somewhat earlier than 'E' (tenth-ninth centuries BC).

to the narrative.<sup>242</sup>

As against this, while detailing the inspired pen men of the OT, the authors of *'All Scripture is Inspired of God and Beneficial'* have stated Moses as the writer of the Genesis. A note against the same, however, shows that it has been compiled on the basis of 12 different sources prior to Moses (pbAh). It reads:

Genesis—compiled from eleven ancient documents and the Joseph account<sup>243</sup>.

This shows that Genesis is not the inspired book of Moses (pbAh) but the same seems to have been compiled by others on the basis of many different writings prior to Moses (pbAh) or even after him. For such and many other reasons, most of the modern scholars no longer believe that Moses (pbAh) could be the author of Genesis. Similarly, the scholars reject

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<sup>240</sup> *The Interpreter's Bible Dic* 2:1 explains 'E' (Elohist) as:

[‘Elohist’ is] One of the Principal narrative sources or strata of the PENTATEUCH. The term is derived from a Hebrew word for ‘God’ (‘אלוהים’, Elohim, see God. Names of), the use of which is characteristic of this source.

<sup>241</sup> D. N. Freedman explains ‘P’ in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* 3:617 as:

The designation of the so-called Priestly source of the PENTATEUCH. To this source are assigned most of the liturgical genealogical, legal, and technical materials, connected by a bare minimum of narrative. The Priestly compilation is usually dated after the captivity, in the sixth or fifth century BC.

<sup>242</sup> *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, USA, 1990), 2:367.

<sup>243</sup> *All Scripture is Inspired of God and Beneficial* (NY: Watchtower Bible & Tract Society, USA, 1963), p.2.

the entire episode of Abraham's defeating four kings and receiving blessings from Melchisedek as incredible. We, therefore, cannot attach any value to the narrative i.e. Gen 14:18-19 depicting Melchizedek greater than Abraham (pbAh).

In this respect it will be interesting to read the comments recorded in *The Enc. of Religion* as under:

The special effort to fit the war between Abraham and the kings of the east (Gen. 14) into the history of the second millennium has failed to yield plausible proposals. The four eastern kingdoms, Elam, Babylonia, Assyria, and that of the Hittites, referred to cryptically in this text, never formed an alliance, nor did they ever control Palestine either collectively or individually during the second millennium BCE. The whole account is historically impossible, and the story is very likely a late addition to Genesis.<sup>244</sup>

The same source also records that:

The Priestly (P) source is of postexilic date (c. 400 BCE) and is found only in the episodes of Genesis 17 and 23 and in a few chronological notices. (...). The P writer made a few additions to this tradition in the postexilic period, while the story about the kings of the east in Gen. 14 was the latest addition in the Hellenistic period.<sup>245</sup>

In view of the above the casual reference i.e. Gen 14:18-19 inserted into the text during the Hellenistic period cannot authenticate the high-priesthood of Melchizedek. The entire theory of salvation developed by St. Paul on the basis of righteousness through

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<sup>244</sup> *The Enc. of Religion*, 1:13, s.v. 'Abraham'.

<sup>245</sup> *The Enc. of Religion*, 1:14.

faith alone, therefore, hangs on a thin thread unable to bear the burden of the lofty mansion of salvation suggested by him. No prophet of the Israelites including Jesus himself ever talked about him. Factually during the period intervening Moses (pbAh) and St. Paul, Melchisedek had nothing to do with the faith or the law of the Lord. He was reportedly a Canaanite while Gen 9:24-27 had already condemned the Canaanites by placing them under the curse of Noah (Gen 9:24-27). How could then Melchisedek be an exception to the said curse? Genesis is silent about the genealogy, the birth, the works, the faith, the teachings or the death of Melchisedek who remains an obscure and mysterious figure because nothing is known about the origin or the end of the so called 'Priest of the Most High God'. The said mysteriousness and obscurity of Melchisedek was, however, useful for St. Paul because he needed a formless mass to mould into any shape he desired. St. Paul, therefore, made good use of certain extra biblical material to describe Melchisedek as an archetype of Jesus Christ (pbAh) to dissociate him from the affirmed and most esteemed Law of Moses (pbAh), the priesthood of Aaron (pbAh) and also from the entire line of the Prophets of God or of the Abrahamaitic faith.

Aside from Gen 14:18-19 and Ps 110:4, we find no other reference to Melchizedek in the OT. Some extra-biblical sources pertaining to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC, however, helped St. Paul to depict Melchizedek as a prototype of Jesus Christ (pbAh). Even recent discoveries i.e. Dead Sea Scrolls etc., also make some reference to him. *Enc. Judaica* explains:

He has also been identified with the Archangel Michael. Melchizedek is also mentioned in another Qumran text, the meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek is retold. Here it is Abraham who offers the tithe to Melchizedek: "And he (i.e. Abraham) gave him a tithe of all the good of the king of Elam and his companions" (cf. Heb. 7:2 followed by the Christian translations of Genesis where, however, Melchizedek, not Abraham is the subject of the verse). The Question of who gave the tithe to whom, was of considerable importance in rabbinical literature. In several places Melchizedek is stated to be a descendant of Noah, and is even identified with Shem the son of Noah. The same sources maintain that his priesthood was taken away from him and bestowed upon Abraham because he blessed Abraham first and only afterward blessed God. (Gen 14:19-20; cf. Ned. 32b; Lev. R. 25:6). Abraham's priesthood is also mentioned in connection with Ps. 110 (Gen. R., 55:6). In other rabbinical sources Melchizedek is mentioned among the four messianic figures allegorically implied by the four smiths" of Zechariah 2:3. Melchizedek's messianic functions are also elaborated in two other literary documents. At the end of several manuscripts of the Slavonic Book of Enoch appears the story of the miraculous birth of Melchizedek as the son of Nir, Noah's brother. He is transported to heaven and becomes the head of a line of priests leading down to messianic days. There will presumably be another eschatological Melchizedek who will function as both priest and king. In symbolizing Melchizedek as Jesus in his three functions as messiah, king, and high priest (see below) the author's ingenuity combines all the motives singled out in the above-mentioned sources. A Gnostic sect whose particular theological position is unknown called itself after Melchizedek. [Ithamar Gruenwald]

## In Christian Tradition

The two brief and somewhat enigmatic references to Melchizedek in the Bible provided the New Testament with a subject for typological interpretation. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (7:1-7), Melchizedek (king of justice-Zedek; of peace-Salem) is described as unique, being both a priest and a king, and because he is 'without father, without mother, without genealogy'; he is eternal, 'having neither beginning of days nor end of life.' in this respect Melchizedek resembles Jesus, the son of God, and thus is a type of the savior.

Abraham, and therefore Levi 'in the loins of his father' (ibid. 9-10), paid the tithe in submission to Melchizedek. Since in Christian tradition Jesus is high priest 'after the order of Melchizedek' and not after the order of Aaron" (ibid, 7:11, 17-21), Jesus' priesthood is excellent, superior to that of Abraham's descendant, and transcends all human, imperfect orders (Heb. 7:23-28; 8:1-6). To Christians the objection that Jesus, like Aaron, was 'in the loins' of the patriarch, and consequently paid the tithe was met by the church fathers with the argument that Jesus, though descended from Abraham, had no human father.<sup>246</sup>

Abraham had been blessed by God Who declared him a blessing for the people of the world. God had said that '*in thee shall all the families of the earth, be blessed*' (Gen 12:3c). As against this, Melchisedek's blessing Abraham was a superfluous act. The person who had already been blessed by God who declared him a blessing for all the families of the earth needed no further blessings from anyone else. In view of this,

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<sup>246</sup> *Enc. Judaica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn, 14:11-12, s.v. 'Melchizedek'

those who attach any importance to the blessings of Melchisedek assign him a position superior to God.

Different nations in the ancient past had their own most high gods. It is, therefore, difficult for us to know whether the most high god of Melchisedek was the same as the God of Abraham. May be Melchisedek had blessed Abraham (pbAh) in the name of some god other than the nameless God of Abraham (pbAh). In any case, it is clear that after the episode of blessing (Gen 14:18-19), Abraham (pbAh) always ignored the said priest as well as the Most High God worshiped by him.

It is estimated that Abraham (pbAh) met Melchizedek at the age of about 85 years i.e. almost a year before the birth of Ishmael (pbAh) and about 14 years before the covenant of circumcision. Hence, after the blessings of Melchizedek, Abraham (pbAh) lived quite near to Melchizedek for about 90 years during which he neither met him nor talked about him again. So much so that Abraham (pbAh) neglected the said priest while offering Isaac as an oblation at mount Moriah, the place within the capital city and in the jurisdiction of the high priesthood of Melchisedek. This shows that the blessings, the faith or the priesthood of Melchizedek meant nothing to Abraham (pbAh). No true prophet of the Lord ever talked of him. Only St. Paul holds him higher than all the prophets of the Lord mentioned in the OT.

In spite of all this, the Christian expositors of the Bible treat Melchisedek as Archetype of Jesus Christ (pbAh). They follow St. Paul who relied on the following:

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread

and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: <sup>247</sup>

An unknown contributor of the Psalms had said:

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. <sup>248</sup>

The verses quoted above were utilized by St. Paul to develop a new theology exalting the position of Melchisedek as compared to Abraham (pbAh), Moses (pbAh) and Aaron (pbAh). By indicating inferior spiritual position of the said prophets, it was easy for St. Paul to break away from all the affirmed commandments of the Lord received through them. According to his interpretation, Ps. 110:4 applied to no one else than Jesus (pbAh) who was the priest forever in the order of Melchisedek. Following the creed of St. Paul, the Christian expositors continue to exalt the power and personal sanctity of Melchisedek as compared to Abraham (pbAh) and the prophets. It has been said:

Abraham represents earth; Melchisedek is the High Priest of Heaven. <sup>249</sup>

Instead of Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh) or Ishmael (pbAh), the expositors designate Melchisedek as the first priest of God in the history of the world. They assert:

The origin of the patriarchal dispensation is the

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<sup>247</sup> Gen 14:18-19 KJV.

<sup>248</sup> Ps 110:4

<sup>249</sup> Sir. W. Robertson Nicoll & others, *The Expositor's Dic. of Texts* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1910), 1:40.



holiness of one man - the man Melchisedek. The origin of the Jewish dispensation is the holiness of one man - Moses. The origin of the Christian dispensation is from the human side the holiness of one man - the man Christ Jesus.<sup>250</sup>

The point of comparison between Melchisedek and Christ is just the uncanonical manner of their ordination. Looking at the matter from the human side, and abstracting the attention from theological prepossessions there is nothing more remarkable than the uncanonical aspect of the Son of Man. He has obtained it 'after the manner of Melchisedek. Unconsecrated he became the source of consecrations.<sup>251</sup>

So far as Jesus (pbAh) son of Mary was concerned, he lived as a man and prophet of Israel as strict follower of the Law of Moses (pbAh). He knew nothing about the uncanonical aspect ascribed to him by St. Paul and his followers. Jesus (pbAh) always venerated Abraham (pbAh) and affirmed the everlasting nature of the Law of Moses (pbAh). The Qur'ān, too, gives us a detailed reference about the lives, the teachings and the experiments of the great prophets of the Lord with their assurance of happy reward for those who believed in the Lord and obeyed his commandments. Others were those who rebelled against the Lord and the Prophets were doomed to meet their woeful end on earth besides everlasting torment in the hell in the hereafter. The Qur'ān, therefore, counts many prophets of the Lord such as Adam (pbAh), Noah

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<sup>250</sup> The Expositor's Dic. of Texts, 1:40.

<sup>251</sup> G. Matheson, Representative Men of the Bible, p. 43; as quoted by The Expositor's Dic. of Texts, 1910, 1:41.

(pbAh), Hūd (pbAh), Sālih (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Ishmael (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh), Joseph (pbAh), Shu'ayb (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), Aaron (pbAh), David (pbAh), Solomon (pbAh), Isaiah (pbAh), Jonah (pbAh), Elijah (pbAh), John (pbAh) and Jesus Christ (pbAh), etc; but it does not mention the name of Melchizedek as a prophet or the priest of the Lord. Since no true prophet of the Lord ever talked about Melchizedek, therefore, Gen 14:18-19 cannot be treated as a revelation from the Lord. It was perhaps due to the scarcity of the material about Abraham (pbAh) that some composer of the Genesis adopted or assimilated the said legend of the Old into the Genesis. In view of the above, Gen 14:18-19 has no Canonical importance at all.

Scholars agree that the earliest writings in the N T were the epistles of Paul. These epistles written approximately during 51 to 67 A.D. preceded even the composition of the four Gospels ascribed to Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John. The said Gospels written after the epistles of Paul, therefore, reflect the influence of the theology developed by St. Paul. It was perhaps due to the said impact that Jesus (pbAh) had been quoted saying '*Before Abraham (pbAh) was, I am*' (Joh 8:58). Not only this, Paul was rather bold enough to show Jesus (pbAh) as well as himself greater than Moses (pbAh):

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded

the house hath more honour than the house.<sup>252</sup>

This shows that Paul sanctified not only his followers but also himself as an appointee of Jesus Christ (pbAh) and worthy of more glory than Moses (pbAh). In addition to exaltation of the believers, the apostle (Paul) and Jesus Christ (pbAh), he also utilized the following to promote his theology:

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.<sup>253</sup>

St. Paul interpreted the above noted verses of Psalms in such a manner that Jesus was proclaimed as son of God and a High Priest forever in the line of succession to Melchizedek. He says:

And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered,

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<sup>252</sup> Heb 3:1-3 KJV.

<sup>253</sup> Ps 2:6-7 KJV.

seeing ye are dull of hearing.<sup>254</sup>

It was further said that:

For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.<sup>255</sup>

Since the theology of St. Paul could not be developed on the foundations of the faith and the Law of Moses (pbAh), therefore, he suggested annulling the same on the excuse of being weak and unprofitable. Thus, St. Paul claimed himself more authoritative and a better judge as compared to the Lord God of the Universe. He was arrogant enough to declare that the commandments of the Lord made nothing perfect and only the introduction of a better hope was likely to draw people nigh unto God (Heb 7:19). By such words, St. Paul suggests incompetence and imperfection of God of the Old Testament who lacked wisdom and foresight due to which He misjudged the end result of His own commandments.

Chapter 8 of the Hebrews has entirely been devoted to show Jesus as high priest through whom the new covenant had been solemnized. For this, St. Paul took help from Jeremiah 31:31-34. We, however, observe that the said verses of Jeremiah do not apply to Jesus as we shall discuss subsequently. So far as Jesus is

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<sup>254</sup> Heb 5:4-10 KJV.

<sup>255</sup> Heb 7:17-19 KJV.

concerned, he never made any new covenant with the people. No one has ever been able to produce the contents of the supposed covenant of Jesus (pbAh) with the Israelites or the mankind at large. It is only St. Paul or his followers who instead of a factual covenant on earth talk of some imaginary or mystical covenant of Jesus (pbAh) with man through the agency of the Holy Ghost.

The Christians do not appreciate that the teachings and interpretations of St. Paul openly contradict the teachings of Jesus (pbAh) who lived as a man, a prophet and a humble servant of the Lord. He was a strict follower of the Law of Moses (pbAh) and did not believe that even the smallest detail of law can ever be done away with. He said:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>256</sup>

Jesus (pbAh) also said:

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.<sup>257</sup>

This shows that Jesus Christ (pbAh) stuck to the law of

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<sup>256</sup> Mat 5:17-19 KJV.

<sup>257</sup> Luk 16:17 KJV.

Moses (pbAh) till his death and did not divert from the same.

ST. PAUL'S DIVERSION  
FROM THE LAW OF MOSES (pBAH)

Right from the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great, we find that the Jews had rebelled numerously against the foreign rule and resisted the promulgation of the Greek Law. All efforts to eliminate Judaism and the Law of Moses had failed in spite of killing thousands of people firstly by the Greeks and then by the Romans. They, therefore, devised the new plan to shake the foundations of the Jewish faith, i.e. monotheism and the Law of Moses (pBAH). Although it cannot be asserted that St. Paul was an agent of Rome yet his teachings and efforts strengthen such presumption. He, perhaps, had the special assignment to destroy monotheism and the Law of Moses (pBAH) to replace the same with the concept of trinity and the law of the Romans throughout the Roman Empire. St. Paul's work, therefore, aims at destroying the absolute oneness of Yahweh, the Lord God of Israel. By suggesting two new Gods and freedom from the law of Yahweh, the Jews and other people were free to worship other Gods and also to accept promulgation of the law of the Romans in their lands. As such, the Roman world could succeed to

attain uniformity of religion and law in the lands controlled by them. Such Catholicism (All-encompassing, All-embracing, All-inclusive, i.e. universalism) of the religion and of the law of the Romans was aimed at promoting cohesion and harmony among the people under their rule.

Jews had been the hard nut to crack. They believed in no God or king other than Yahweh and attached utmost importance to His law. Although Ten Commandments enjoyed the supreme importance as compared to other law yet the first commandment had been held as the core of the covenant of the Israelites with Yahweh their God. Even Jesus (pbAh) had stressed the super importance of the first commandment which reads as under:

I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me.<sup>258</sup>

The second and third Commandment quoted below support the same:

Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,<sup>259</sup>

The above noted commandments formed the core of

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<sup>258</sup> Deu 5:6-7 KJV.

<sup>259</sup> Deu 5:8-9 KJV.



faith of the Jews. For other law, they referred only to the four books ascribed to Moses, i.e. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The Jews, therefore, never tried to derive law or faith from the other writings included in the OT. Subsequently, these books did not serve the purpose of St. Paul who needed to drift away from the strict monotheist faith and the Law of Moses (pbAh). He, therefore, found it expedient to ignore the books of law or to treat the same at par with all other writings in the OT. Having learnt the Law and interpretation from the most eminent scholars of the Jews, St. Paul had the capabilities to derive full benefit from any writings of the OT and to interpret the same to support his views. Hence, to bypass the 10 commandments and especially the first commandment stressing absolute oneness of God, he was bold enough to declare that:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.<sup>260</sup>

Through these deceptive, dubious, and confounding words quoted above, St Paul destroyed the supreme importance of the Ten Commandments and also the sanctity of the Law of Moses. Words of any person whose writings were haply included into the OT became as authoritative as the confirmed commandment of God. Now no difference could be drawn between the Ten Commandments of the Lord and writings of

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<sup>260</sup> 2Ti 3:16-17 KJV.

anonymous poets/writers found in the OT. The first commandment of the Lord stressed and endorsed even by Jesus himself stood at par with any other words or assertions in the Jewish scriptures. St. Paul, therefore, enjoyed a free hand to use any phrase in the scripture to prove polytheism or to assert divinity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost.

Aside from monotheism, St. Paul also destroyed the basis of the Jewish faith which professed that salvation depended on doing good works in accordance with the commandments of Jehovah the Lord God of Israel. Instead of 10 commandments or the affirmed teachings of Moses (pbAh), St. Paul depended mainly on Gen 15:6 to promote his own theology. He said:

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.<sup>261</sup>

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.<sup>262</sup>

On the basis of the words of the composer of Genesis (15:6), St. Paul developed his theory of salvation through faith, without making it known to his followers that the faith preached by him was quite contrary to the faith of Abraham (pbAh) and was also against the affirmed faith of Moses and all other prophets of the Israelites. St. Paul has, therefore, misrepresented Abraham (pbAh) and his faith about one and the only Lord God of the Universe. Had he followed the true faith of Abraham (pbAh), there could

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<sup>261</sup> Rom 4:3 KJV.

<sup>262</sup> Gal 3:6 KJV.

be no provision of any other god except the one God worshiped by him. *Abraham (pbAh) never had any faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ (pbAh) or the Holy Ghost as propounded by St. Paul.* Instead of the testified revelations of the Lord, St. Paul relied entirely on his own reasoning to replace the faith authorized by the scripture and cherished by the prophets with the theology developed by him. There is, however, no sound reasons to believe that there can be any other way to salvation except through obedience to all the commandments of the Lord and following the true faith and traditions of Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), Jesus (pbAh) and other prophets of the Lord.

It is pertinent to note here that St. Paul misrepresented the faith of Abraham (pbAh) only to superimpose his own faith on the faith of Abraham (pbAh). According to the OT as well as the Qur'ān, strict Monotheism and absolute surrender before the will of the Almighty had been the essence of the faith of Abraham (pbAh). It was in the cause of the Lord that Abraham (pbAh) separated himself from the worshipers of Idols or those who believed in any god other than the one and the only Lord God of the Universe. His absolute rejection of polytheism was the main cause of animosity with his father, family, people and the King of Ur. Besides this, Abraham (pbAh) had always been grateful to the Lord for His bounteous blessings on him. He had full faith in the compassion, forgiveness and providence of the Lord. Abraham (pbAh), therefore, depended entirely on the Lord and loved Him more than his own self or

anything else in the world. Abraham (pbAh) never believed in the inheritance of sin from Adam (pbAh) nor had he any idea of the eternal condemnation of man or his estrangement from the Lord.

As against the faith of Abraham (pbAh) in the love and compassion of the Lord, St. Paul highlighted relentless-ness of the Lord by interpreting the story of creation in such a manner that promoted a distrust and disappointment from Him. By suggesting estrangement between man and God, St. Paul has painted a dark picture of utter helplessness of man before the ruthless and blood thirsty God of justice bent upon punishing mankind unless and until their sins are expiated through the blood sacrifice of an unblemished lamb i.e. Jesus Christ the 'Son of God'. The newly invented Son of God being the ultimate savior of mankind was shown more benevolent than God his father. As such, the faith preached by St. Paul was quite contrary to the faith of Abraham or all other figures mentioned by him in Heb. 11:8-12, 17.

It is, however, worth noting here that the theory of salvation merely through verbal confession of faith has been denied even by James, the brother of Jesus<sup>263</sup> who had been the undisputed leader of the

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<sup>263</sup> *The Interpreter's D.B.* 2:791f explains about 'James' as:

A brother of the Lord. He is listed first among the brothers of Jesus. Presumably as the oldest of them (Matt.13:55; Mark 6:3). (...). NT and early Christian writers refer to James as a 'brother' of Jesus, and the natural interpretation of the language of that period is the literal one, that, James was a son of Joseph and Mary, younger than Jesus. (...). James apparently was not a disciple during the ministry of Jesus (...), and he appeared very early as an important leader in

Christian sect of the Jews with effect from the death of Jesus Christ (pbAh) up to his own death in 62 A.D. James says:

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.<sup>264</sup>

The followers of St. Paul, therefore, neither bless Abraham (pbAh) nor seek any blessing the like of him. Only the Muslims acknowledge Abraham (pbAh) as their father-in-faith and follow all his traditions, i.e. Hājj, 'Umrah, Sacrifice, Sa'y between Sāfā and Marwah Mountains, circumcision, circumambulation of Ka'bah, prayers and *I'tikāf* following the traditions and the strict monotheist teachings of Abraham (pbAh).

It is only the Muslims that accept Abraham (pbAh) as paragon of virtue and they continue day and night to seek blessings of the Lord and profess that God's blessings are with Abraham (pbAh); and it has already been foretold in the book of Genesis of the Bible and enjoined by the Lord in the Qur'ān. The Genesis records:

And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that

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Jerusalem. Though he was not one of the Twelve, James was apparently regarded as an apostle.

<sup>264</sup> James 2:20.

thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become *a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?* [stress added] For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, *and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment* [stress added]; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.<sup>265</sup>

In view of this, the claim of the Israelites as the only people inheriting the blessing of God through Abraham (pbAh) is a hoax because neither the other nations were blessed through them nor did they keep the way of the Lord. They consciously prevented transfusion of the blessings of the Lord through Abraham (pbAh) to other nations of the world. Similarly, they failed miserably in the trial of the Lord 'to keep the way of Lord or to do justice and judgment'. From Exodus to the prophets, most of the books of the OT are replete with the incidents of numerous transgressions of the Israelites. In view of the above, we conclude that God's promises of blessing all the families of the earth through Abraham (pbAh) and his descendants could not be fulfilled through the Israelites. It, however, stood amply fulfilled through Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) whom the Lord sent as a mercy to all the creatures. His followers, i.e. the Muslims have always been eager to extend those blessings to all the people in the world. The companions of Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) were the only people on earth who kept the way of the Lord with such perfection that Almighty Allah was

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<sup>265</sup> Gen 18:17 -19 KJV.

pleased to appreciate them in the following words:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ  
وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ.<sup>266</sup>

And as for the first and foremost of those who have forsaken the domain of evil and of those who have sheltered and succoured the Faith,<sup>267</sup> as well as those who follow them in [the way of] righteousness – God is well pleased with them, and well-pleased are they with Him. And for them has He readied gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide beyond the count of time: this is the triumph supreme.<sup>268</sup>

Due to extreme devotedness of the companions of the prophet, the Lord was also pleased to certify them as the best of the people as recorded hereunder:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ

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<sup>266</sup> Al-Qur'ān, *Al-Tawbah* 9:100.

<sup>267</sup> The translator, Allamah Asad, has given a footnote here:

In the above context, the term *muhājirūn*- lit., 'emigrants', (...) applies primarily to the Meccan followers of the Prophet who migrated from Mecca to Medina – which until then was called Yathrib – (...): the 'first and foremost' among them were the earliest emigrants, i.e., those who left Mecca in or before the year 622 CE (which marks the beginning of the Islamic *hijrī* era) and in the course of next few years, when the Muslim community at Medina was still in danger of being overrun by the powerful Quraysh of Mecca. Similarly, the term *ansār* (lit. 'helpers') applies here to the early converts from among the people of Medina who sheltered and succoured their brethren in faith – the 'first and foremost' among them being those who embraced Islam before and shortly after the Prophet's and his Companions' Exodus (*hijrah*) from Mecca (*The Message*, 1980, p.278f).

<sup>268</sup> Allamah M. Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 278f.

269 آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ.

You are indeed the best community, that has been brought forth for [the good of] humankind: you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and you believe in God. Now if the followers of earlier revelation had attained to [this kind of] faith, it would have been for their own good; [but only few] among them are believers, while most of them are iniquitous.<sup>270</sup>

The declaration of the Lord was not based on any blood relation with them, nor was it said that it was due to their being the seed of Abraham (pbAh). The Lord appreciated them only due to their unwavering faith in Allah, and due to following the traditions of Abraham (pbAh) and Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) to enjoin people what was right and to forbid them from what was wrong. The blessings through the Muslims are, therefore, extensive enough to cover all the creatures on earth who believe in Allah and submit to His will. Consequently, the Muslim followers of Abraham (pbAh) were the first people on earth to establish an exemplary system of social justice and to administer justice in civil and criminal matters. Other nations started emulating the traditions of justice, set by Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) his successors and followers since the seventh century A.D.

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<sup>269</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 3.110.

<sup>270</sup> The Message of the Qur'ān, p. 83.



## EXAGGERATED ASSERTIONS OF THE ISRAELITES

There are certain statements in the Bible telling us about innumerable descendants of Abraham (pbAh), e.g.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall **thy seed** also be numbered.<sup>271</sup>

And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, *if thou be able to number them* [stress added]: and he said unto him, So shall *thy seed* [stress added] be.<sup>272</sup>

Both of these predictions show that Abraham (pbAh) would have so many descendants that no one will be able to count them by numbers. This prediction has been fulfilled primarily through the descendants of Hagar as below:

And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply *thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude* [stress added].<sup>273</sup>

Factually, no one has ever been able to number the

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<sup>271</sup> Gen 13:16 KJV.

<sup>272</sup> Gen 15:5 KJV.

<sup>273</sup> Gen 16:10 KJV.

descendants of Hagar through Ishmael (pbAh) and the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) through his six other sons from Keturah. As for the Israelites, they never grew up to such a large extent that they could not be counted by numbers. Initially, the family of Israel (Jacob) consisted of only about 16 persons when Jacob (pbAh) returned home from Laban. The direct descendants of Jacob (pbAh) who went to Egypt were 70 excluding the wives of 11 sons of Jacob (Gen. 46: 26 -27). Subsequently, we find extremely exaggerated number of the Israelites as per censuses detailed below:

In the fourth month after the Exodus, when the people were encamped at Sinai. The number of men from twenty years old and upward was then 603,550 (Ex. 38:26). (2.) Another census was made just before the entrance into Canaan, when the number was found to be 601,730, showing thus a small decrease (Num. 26:51). (3.) The next census was in the time of David, when the number, exclusive of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, was found to be 1,300,000 (2 Sam. 24:9; 1 Chr. 21:5). (...). (5.) After the return from Exile the whole congregation of Israel was numbered, and found to amount to 42,360 (Ezra 2:64). A census was made by the Roman Govt. in the time of our Lord (Luke 2:1).<sup>274</sup>

It has been discussed in detail elsewhere that the total number of Israelites as shown in Ex 38:26, Num. 26:51, 2-Sam. 24:9 and 1Chr. 21:5 are extremely inflated figures which are evidently impossible and incorrect. It is to be noted that as per census conducted in the wilderness, the total number of Israelites excluding the Levites consisted of 6,03,550 men of 20 years and above (Exodus

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<sup>274</sup> *Easton's Bible Dic*, s.v. 'CENSUS'.

38:26). Levites were excluded from the census. Assuming that the Levites too, had about 51,450 men of the same age, the total number of those who were fit to fight comes to 6,55,000. We also know that excluding children, women and men of old age, we can hardly find one person of 20 years and above who could be fit to fight. According to this, the approximate total of the Israelites may be somewhere about  $6,55,000 \times 5 = 38,75,000$  persons which obviously seems to be impossible.

Some time after the death of Joseph, the Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptians. As such, they hardly had any chance to have numerous wives from the Egyptians. If so, there is hardly any possibility that  $70+11=81$  persons could multiply themselves to such an extent to touch about 4 million people just in 3-4 hundred years. The fabulous and exaggerated nature of the said assertion comes to light when we compare the same with a recent estimate of population in the Sinai Peninsula. The '*Bible as History*' asserts:

Today at a rough estimate 5 thousands to 7 thousands nomads live with their flocks on the Sinai Peninsula. Israelites must, therefore, have been about 6,000 strong since the battle with the Amalekites appears to have been indecisive.<sup>275</sup>

As such, if during the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the Sinai Peninsula could not afford more than 7000 nomads how can we assume that about 4 million Israelites could have lived along with a similar number of their animals for about 40 years in the

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<sup>275</sup> Welner Keller, *Bible as Hist.* (NY: Bantom Books, 1982), 131.

wilderness? The impossibility increases further when it be considered that there might have been a similar strength of other people already living with their animals in the Sinai Desert. This shows that the eagerness of the priests and the scribes to assert the greatness of their race had caused to exaggerate the numbers of the Israelites more than three hundred times the number of the Israelites who might have come out of Egypt with Moses (pbAh) according to the author of '*The Bible as History*', as quoted above.

The OT also refers to the census conducted by King David as reported in 2Sam 24:9, according to which the total number of men capable of military service in Israel was 8,00,000 persons and in Judah 5,00,000 which differs from the figure of 11,00,000 in Israel and 4,70,000 in Judah.<sup>276</sup> Ignoring the difference in numbers, we observe that Israel and Judea did not exist as separate entities during the reign of King David. It was after the death of King Solomon son of David that the Ten northern tribes revolted against Rehoboam son of Solomon. They formed their own state in the north under the name and style of Israel. As such, Rehoboam was 'King only of the people who lived in the territory of Judah' (1Ki 12:17). The story is also recounted in Ch. 10 of 2Chr. The figures shown in the census cannot, however, be relied upon because Israel and Judah did not exist as separate territories during the reign of King David. As such, presence of numerous exaggerations, confictions, contradictions and assertions aimed at establishing superiority of the

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<sup>276</sup> 1Chr 21:5. It is generally admitted that the Chronicler was used to exaggerate the numbers in his statements.

Israelites by humiliating other nations have seriously impaired the credibility of such assertions in the Bible. Similarly, the allegation of slavery against Hagar and accusations against Ishmael can be treated as baseless propaganda because they aim at aggrandizement of the Israelites by debasing their rivals.

As against the boastful claims of the Israelites, we observe that the Ishmaelites usually exceeded more than 10 times the total number of the Israelites. Similarly, as compared with small holdings of land by the Israelites, the possessions of the Ishmaelites exceeded more than 250 times in the Arabian Peninsula. Except for the reign of King David and King Solomon, the Israelites have always been small people as compared with the Ishmaelites. The Israelites possessed substantial parts of Palestine/ Canaan only for a short period of about 200 years. During the other periods, the possessions of the Israelites hardly exceeded about 4,000 square miles in Canaan, Palestine or its surroundings. Although the number of the descendants of Esau and other descendants of Abraham (pbAh) from his six other sons from Keturah, could never be assessed properly, yet we have reasons to believe that taken collectively, they must also be exceeding many times the total number of Israelites at any time in the past or present. *As such, Israel's boastful claim to be the descendants of Abraham (pbAh), who could not be counted by numbers, is obviously incorrect.* Factually the Israelites had always been a small part of Abraham (pbAh)'s descendants, and they were counted by numbers many times even before their final dispersal in 130 A.D. *'The Numbers'* is everlasting evidence to the fact

that the total number of the Israelites was counted twice during the life of Moses besides subsequent census during the reign of David. Their congregation was also numbered after the Exodus and census by the Roman government as already quoted above.

The Muslims do not deny God's blessings on Isaac, Jacob, Joseph or other prophets of Israel nor have they any prejudice against any of them. They also don't dispute that following blessings have been fulfilled in the descendants of Sarah, Isaac and Jacob:

And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac.<sup>277</sup>

Interpolations such as Gen 17:19b, 21:12 are the product of some after-thought of the composers of Gen. In addition to the above, the following also fall in the same category. God appeared to Isaac in Gerar and said:

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; 4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Gen 17:16 & 19 KJV.

<sup>278</sup> Gen 26:3-4 KJV.

## PROMISES WITH ABRAHAM (PBAH) REAPPLIED TO ISAAC (PBAH)

The verses Quoted above pertained to Abraham (pbAh) but in their eagerness to confine all blessings to the Israelites, they reapplied the same to Isaac (pbAh) so that the Israelites may be depicted as the sole beneficiary of the said blessings. The interpolation in the text is evident from the fact that neither Isaac (pbAh) nor his descendants held everlasting possession of the promised countries nor all the nations were blessed through the Israelites i.e. the descendants of Isaac (pbAh). Only a meager part of the prophecies was fulfilled many centuries after the death of Isaac (pbAh). Even during their heyday, the descendants of Isaac (pbAh) never succeeded to possess the entire land of Palestine/Canaan. The lands of Philistines including Ghaza, Gerar the lands of Tyre, Sidon etc. with certain other smaller parts of Palestine/Canaan could never be possessed by them.

Similarly, the assurance of the Lord that '*I will be with you*' was of no effect for Isaac (pbAh), because he was never found having faith in the same. Soon after God's assurance, he answered to Abimelech: 'And Isaac (pbAh) said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die

for her' (Gen 26:9b). The timidity and the shameful concealment about the true relation of Isaac (pbAh) with Rebecca shows Isaac lacking faith that 'God was with him'. Similarly, the first part of v. 4, i.e 'I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven' seems to be a later insertion in Gen 15:5. This prediction pertaining to Abraham (pbAh) has obviously been re-applied on Isaac (pbAh).

Apparently, blessings on Isaac (pbAh), Gen 26:3-4 quoted earlier, do not accord with the overall background of Gen 26, and especially the following:

And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.<sup>279</sup>

Subsequently, when Abimelech saw Isaac and Rebecca making love, he called him and said:

Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.<sup>280</sup>

Even otherwise, if God had said to Isaac (pbAh) that 'for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries' then there was no possibility of Isaac's expulsion from Gerar. Although, it has been said that both Abraham (pbAh) and Isaac (pbAh) sojourned in Gerar for some time but factually Isaac (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh) and Esau never possessed any part of the said land during their lives. Even during the fabulous

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<sup>279</sup> Gen. 26:7 KJV.

<sup>280</sup> Gen. 26:9 KJV.



victory of King Asa of Judah over the invading Ethiopian army under King Gerah, the Israelites pursued the Ethiopian army up to Gerar and returned to Jerusalem after looting the cities and capturing large number of sheep and camels of shepherds (2Ch. 14:9-15). In spite of the fact that the Israelites plundered the land, looted the people, and spoiled the cities around Gerar; they never held possession of Gerar even for a short while.

The Chronicles 14 makes us believe that King Gerah of Ethiopia had launched an attack with one million men and 300 chariots. King Asa of Judea defeated him with his army consisting of 580,000 men. Both figures are obviously exaggerated and far from fact. Similar exaggeration of Israel's army consisting of 800,000 men under King Jeroboam opposed by Abijah by his 400,000 soldiers (2Ch. 13:3) is a sheer exaggeration of the facts. *Keeping in view the time, the potentialities of the land, and overall estimation of the population of Judea and Israel during different times of the history, the narrative as above can be taken as a fiction than a fact.* At no time, the lands of Canaan and Palestine were so densely populated that such fabulous number of men could be chosen to fight against the enemy. Such figures far exceed even the total population of Palestine at the time of Balfour Declaration in 1917. Samuel Schor says 'the whole population of Palestine did not exceed 700,000.'<sup>281</sup>

Ignoring the exaggeration, as above, it is to be

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<sup>281</sup> *Palestine and the Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn., London: 34 Half Moon lane, S E 24, 1950, p. 109.

observed that the land of Gerar could never be possessed by the patriarchs or their descendants i.e. the Israelites. Due to its non fulfillment, therefore, we can take verses Gen. 26:3-4 assuring the territory, blessings or innumerable descendants to Isaac as an interpolation, instead of the word of God. All such incredible assertions added to the OT by the Israelites make the Bible a dubious account of history as well as faith.

## PROMISE REGARDING THE LAND OF CANAAN

The Bible contains repeated promises of the Lord with Abraham to give the entire land of Canaan to Abraham (pbAh) and his descendants as their everlasting possession. We, however, observe that Abraham (pbAh) possessed no land till his death except the field of Macphela purchased from the Hittites to bury Sarah there (Gen 23:1-24). While commenting on the position of the Jews in Palestine in 1948, Samuel Schor says:

They possess a few synagogues and cemeteries (...) like their father Abraham who started with a 'stone altar and his wife's grave'.<sup>282</sup>

Similarly, there was no evidence that Isaac ever possessed any land in Canaan. Jacob, too, did not own the land even to pitch his tent there. The OT, however tells us that during the conquests of Joshua, the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) through Jacob (pbAh) defeated the Amorites<sup>283</sup>, the Canaanites<sup>284</sup>,

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<sup>282</sup> *Palestine and the Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn., London: 34 Half Moon lane, S E 24, 1950, p. 121.

<sup>283</sup> 'Amorites' has already been explained in the last but one paragraph of Chapter 8.

the Perizzites<sup>285</sup>, and several other small kingdoms as detailed in Jos. 12:8-24. It was, therefore, the first foothold of the Israelites in Canaan. In view of the non fulfillment of the promise of land with Abraham, we believe that the Lord had not promised anything material to him while calling him to go to Canaan. Had the God promised any land to Abraham (pbAh) and to his immediate descendants, the same would have been materialized in the life of Abraham (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh) or Jacob (pbAh) simply because the word of God cannot fail. It was about 475 years after the promise with Abraham that the Israelites got hold of a substantial part of the land. Subsequently, the Israelites could not possess the said lands independently except for a short while. Finally, in about 130 AD, the rebellion of the Israelites was crushed by the Romans with a great massacre of the Israelites, which resulted in complete destruction of the city walls and all buildings in Jerusalem. The survivors, if any, dispersed throughout the world and the Israelites were forbidden from the land, which presented a true picture of the desolation predicted by Jesus Christ (pbAh).<sup>286</sup>

Prior to final destruction of Jerusalem in 130 A.D., the Romans had built a new pagan city on the ruins of the old Jerusalem on a much smaller scale than the original city and named the same Capitolina Aelia.

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<sup>284</sup> ‘Canaanites’ has already been explained in the last but one paragraph of Chapter 8.

<sup>285</sup> ‘Perizzites’ has already been explained in the last but one paragraph of Chapter 8.

<sup>286</sup> See Matt 24:15-22, Mark 13:14-20, Luk 21:20-24.

Subsequent to the said episode, the Romans proscribed the entry of the Jews in the desolated land on pain of death. Later on, it was during the reign of Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D that the city was given a Christian outlook than a city of the pagans. It was during this period that the embargo or restriction on the entry of the Jews in Jerusalem was lifted enabling the Jews to visit the holy city and the land.

In about 637-638 AD Muslim Arabs, i.e the descendants and followers of Ishmael (pbAh), conquered the holy city and entire land of Palestine without any bloodshed in Jerusalem or its surroundings. Except for an interval of about 88 years (1099-1187 AD), the Muslims continued to hold the entire land of Canaan and Palestine up to 1917 AD after which the British army entered into Jerusalem and under their protection, the Israelites started to share certain parts of the land which continued to increase day by day.

All this shows that the prediction about the everlasting possession of the land by Abraham (pbAh) or the Israelites, the self-claimed only legitimate descendants of Abraham, was not fulfilled. During about 4000 years since Abraham (pbAh), the Israelites held only parts of the Holy Land for about 700 years. Major parts of the land of Palestine, however, did not remain under their control for more than 200 years. For the remaining period, Canaan or Palestine remained occupied by the Canaanites, the Assyrians, the Mesopotamians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans and the Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites i.e. the Muslims held effective control of the said lands much

longer as compared with the Israelites or any other nation in the world. As such, it will be wrong to presume that the Israelites were the only descendants of Abraham (pbAh) or that the Lord had promised permanent possession of Canaan only to the Israelites. Besides this, there are other sound reasons to believe that the Lord did not make any promise specifying the land of Canaan to be given to Abraham (pbAh) or his descendants. The Qur'ān has referred to no such clearly defined or limited promise of land with Abraham (pbAh). Anyhow, it is a historically established fact that the twelve tribes of the Ishmaelites were holding effective control and undisturbed possession over vast territories throughout Arabia with effect from the death of Ishmael (pbAh) to the present times and the same is likely to continue in the future. After the advent of Islam, however, the descendants and followers of Abraham (pbAh) possessed major parts of the Middle East and continue to hold central parts of the world till today. As such, the promise of land with Abraham (pbAh), if any, should have been extensive enough to cover all those lands possessed by the Jews, the Muslims and the Christians collectively, and the same cannot be reduced to the size of the lands ever possessed by the Israelites.

It is to be noted that God had not promised any specific land to Abraham (pbAh) or to his descendants. The Promise of Holy Land was, however, made by the Lord with Moses (pbAh) as quoted below:

يَا قَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِكُمْ

فَتَنقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ. 287

O my people! Enter the holy land which Allah has promised you; but do not turn back [on your faith], for then you will be lost.<sup>288</sup>

This shows that the promise of the Holy Land i.e. Canaan/Palestine did not pertain to Abraham (pbAh). Almighty Allah had, however, given him the Book and Wisdom along with great kingdom to his descendants:

أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا. 289

Do they, perchance, envy other people for what God has granted them out of His bounty? But then, We did grant revelation and Wisdom, unto the house of Abraham, and We did bestow on them a mighty dominion:<sup>290</sup>

As such, the promise of land with Abraham (pbAh), his descendants and followers should have been extensive enough to cover major parts of the world. In order to assert their greatness as compared to their rivals, they exaggerated the figures and their claims. Due to the same reason, they refused to share the land or the blessings with others. Similarly, due to their extreme sense of possessiveness they deprived Almighty Allah from His absolute oneness and sovereignty over the universe. They, therefore, did not worship Him as the God of the universe but as

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<sup>287</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 5:21.

<sup>288</sup> Allamah Asad, *The Message*, p. 146.

<sup>289</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:54.

<sup>290</sup> Allamah Asad, *The Message*, p. 114.

the personal or tribal God of the Israelites. No matter that sovereignty and domain of the Lord had to be limited to accord with the size of the Israelites.



## NO PRIMACY

### TO ISAAC (PBAH) OVER ISHMAEL (PBAH)

The Muslims are not allowed to make distinction between the prophets nor can they criticize any of them. They believe that all of them were blameless and righteous. Anyhow, it is certain that some prophets excelled over others in their ranks. As for Ishmael and Isaac, we find that the former was a Rasūl (Messenger) like Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Lot (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), Jesus (pbAh) and Muḥammad (pbAh). Isaac (pbAh) was simply a prophet (Nabī) like Jacob (pbAh), Joseph (pbAh), Joshua (pbAh), Solomon (pbAh), Zechariah (pbAh) and John the Baptist (pbAh) etc. Although Bible has not mentioned Isaac (pbAh) or Jacob (pbAh) as Prophets yet the Qur'ān has eulogized them by counting them among the most exalted prophets of the Lord (Al Qur'ān 19:49-50). Bible depicts Isaac (pbAh) leading almost inactive life without showing any vigor or prominence during his youth. Even the commentators of the Genesis say that:

Isaac is distinctively a female type. He reveals human nature in a passive attitude. (...). Precisely

the attitude which the old world did not like.<sup>291</sup>

Subsequently, Isaac's blindness in the old age added nothing except his passivity in the life. According to the Bible he spent about fifty seven years of his last days being blind and bed ridden at home.

Both Esau and Jacob (pbAh) were born to Isaac (pbAh) when he was sixty years old (Gen 25:26). Except for some cattle and chattel, he never possessed any land or immovable properties in Canaan. Karen Armstrong depicts him as under:

The Bible seems to indicate that Isaac lacked the resilience of Ishmael his half brother. *After Mount Moriah, the Bible does not let Isaac speak again until he is on his deathbed.* Isaac was by far the most passive of the three patriarchs. There are virtually no stories told about Isaac in his prime: one of these is simply another version of the tale of Abraham and Pharaoh and may have been included by the editors at this point because of a *dearth of Isaac material*. (...). A mere two chapters after Abraham's death we see Isaac as a prematurely aged, blind and dying man – an eloquent *image of a blighted existence*. Isaac's life seems a blank after his father bound him on the altar and came at him with a knife (...). *Isaac was one of those damaged children who have experienced this parental hostility to the full.*

Abraham himself seemed to have little faith in Isaac, the chosen son. As he lay dying, he entrusted the steward of his household with the task of choosing a wife for Isaac. (...). It is almost as

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<sup>291</sup> *The Expositor's Dic. of the Texts*, ed. Sir Robertson Nikol and Jane Studdart, exposition of Gen. 22:22, p. 45.

though he did not trust Isaac to commit himself to the promised land: a mere servant had to supervise the son of the promise. It is also significant that Abraham did not give his instructions to Isaac directly. In a book that sets store by parental benediction, it is striking that the dying Abraham did not pass the blessings on to Isaac in person. It is almost as though Isaac did not exist for him.

In both of the two most important scenes of Isaac's life he is lying down (...). On the altar of sacrifice, and on his death bed. We find Isaac confined to that deathbed, blind and moribund, for twenty years. His life was a slow dying. In some ways, he shared the characteristics of an accursed man: he was paralyzed, passive, and death bound.<sup>292</sup>

The story of Ishmael (pbAh) was strikingly different from that of Isaac (pbAh). He was a prodigious son of Abraham (pbAh) born through Hagar, the youthful princess of Egypt. Despite their hatred against Ishmael (pbAh) the Christian Expositors were perhaps compelled to acknowledge that:

Abraham looked upon the vigorous, bold, brilliant, young Ishmael and said appealingly to god: 'O that Ishmael might live before thee.'<sup>293</sup>

Dr Marcus Dodds D. D. describes Ishmael as below:

Abraham's state of mind is disclosed in the exclamation: 'Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee!' He had learned to love the bold, brilliant domineering boy. He saw how the men liked to serve him and how proud they were of the young

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<sup>292</sup> Karen Armstrong, *In the Beginning* (NY: Ballantine Books, 1996), p. 70-73.

<sup>293</sup> The Expositor's Dic. of Texts p 42.

chief, No doubt his wild intractable ways often made his father anxious. Sarah was there to point out and exaggerated all his faults and to prognosticate<sup>294</sup> mischief. But there he was, in actual flesh and blood, full of life and interest in everything, daily getting deeper into the affections of Abram, who allowed and could not but allow his own life to revolve very much around the dashing, attractive lad. So that the reminder that he was not the promised heir was not entirely welcome. When he was told that the heir of promise was to be Sarah's child, he could not repress the somewhat peevish exclamation 'Oh that Ishmael might serve thy turn!' Why call me off again from this actual attainment to the vague, shadowy, non-existent heir of promise, who surely can never have the brightness of eye and force of limb and lordly ways of this Ishmael?<sup>295</sup>

Since, outstanding qualities of Ishmael (pbAh) were not acceptable to the Israelites, therefore, they seem to have, themselves, interpolated the following words into the Genesis:

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.<sup>296</sup>

But God said to Abraham, 'Don't be worried about the boy and *your slave Hagar*. Do whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that you will have the descendants I have promised. I will also

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<sup>294</sup> 'Prognosticate' means 'foretell'.

<sup>295</sup> *The Expositor's Bible*: 'Vol. 1: Genesis-Exodus', ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (NY: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1903), 1:160.

<sup>296</sup> Gen 17:19 KJV.

give many children to the *son of the slave woman*, so that they will become a nation. He too is your son.<sup>297</sup>

All this contradicts the princely heritage of Ishmael (pbAh) and his descendants as affirmed by the Lord in Gen 17:20. God also affirmed sonship of Ishmael (pbAh) by saying: 'He, too, is your son' as quoted above. The contents of v. 11, i.e. 'this troubled Abraham (pbAh) very much because Ishmael (pbAh) was also his son' also affirmed the same. The Bible presents Ishmael (pbAh) as Abraham's son at other places as well, e.g:

And Abraham took *Ishmael his son*, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. *And Ishmael his son* was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.<sup>298</sup>

As such, through the interpolations i.e. Gen 17:19 and 21:12-13 the Israeli scribes or redactors have refuted the words of God who had promised to make Abraham (pbAh) ancestor of many nations:

As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall

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<sup>297</sup> Gen 21:12-13 GNB.

<sup>298</sup> Gen 17:23-27 KJV.

thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.<sup>299</sup>

It has here been unequivocally affirmed that God Himself has made Abraham (pbAh) the father of many nations. Now the exclusion of other nations from the descendants of Abraham (pbAh), therefore, serves the cause of the Israelites by contradicting the word of God quoted above.

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<sup>299</sup> Gen 17:4-5 KJV.

## PRIORITY OF THE ISHMAELITES OVER THE ISRAELITES

According to '*A Chronology of Biblical History*' by Dr. R C Wetzel USA, 1997, Ishmael was born in about 1881 BC.

Ishmael was brought up as a self-supporting, independent and fast-growing youthful person in an open Bedouin environment and congenial atmosphere. He married at an early age to establish a family of his own. As such, if Ishmael married at the age of 17-20 years as can be presumed under the circumstances, it was possibly between 1864-1861 BC. He got twelve sons in due course, and they started multiplying at Makkah to make a flourishing tribe.

According to the source mentioned above, Isaac was born in 1867 BC, i.e. about 14 years after Ishmael (pbAh). He married at the age of 40 years, i.e. in about 1827 BC. Esau and Jacob (pbAh) were born to Isaac (pbAh) in 1807 when Isaac (pbAh) was about 60 years old. Subsequently, Jacob (pbAh) went to Padan Aram at the age of 77 years and married Leah and Rachel in 1723 BC when Jacob (pbAh) was 84 years. Since the Ishmaelites sprouted from the twelve sons of Ishmael (pbAh) while the Israelites descended from the 12 sons

of Jacob (pbAh), therefore, the difference in the time of the marriage of Ishmael (pbAh) as against the marriage of Jacob (pbAh) can be taken as the time difference between starting multiplication of the Ishmaelites as against the Israelites. The said difference can be worked out by deducting 1723 B.C. from 1864 B.C. which comes to 141 years. We can, therefore, assume that the multiplication of the Ishmaelites had started about 141 years before the multiplication of the Israelites. Ishmaelites were, therefore, about four generations ahead of the Israelites. Due to the said difference in the time of their multiplication, the Ishmaelites might have grown into several tribes by the time Jacob was entering Egypt with his family consisting of 70 persons in all (Gen 46:26-27). Another genetic aspect is also not to be ignored. The Israelites were the progeny of a sterile, barren and aged mother; whereas the Ishmaelites' grand mother was a youthful, fertile and healthy woman. The procreation rate among the Ishmaelites would have naturally been far more flourishing than the Israelites, as the factual position testifies. So, naturally, the descendants of Ishmael (pbAh) might have grown into several tribes, during that period, who, due to their priesthood of Ka'bah, were enjoying sanctity and prestige in the entire region around Makkah.

Consequently, while the twelve sons of Jacob (pbAh) were looking after their cattle around Shechem and Dothan (Gen 37:12-18), the Ishmaelites had gained monopoly over the trade between Yemen, Canaan, Mesopotamia and Egypt. It was a caravan of



Ishmaelite or Midianite merchants travelling with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh from Gilead to Egypt to whom brothers of Joseph (pbAh) sold Joseph (pbAh) for twenty pieces of silver, Gen 37:25- 28. The Midianites (Ishmaelites) took Joseph (pbAh) into Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the palace guard of the king (Gen 37:36). Incidentally, it is the first ever recorded caravan of the traders in history showing the Ishmaelites as the first caravan of traders. It has also recorded sale of a person as a slave, which pertained to Joseph (pbAh), an Israelite, sold as a slave, who was purchased by the Ishmaelites.

Sometime after the emigration of the Israelites to Egypt and after the death of Joseph (pbAh), the Israelites themselves remained enslaved under the Egyptians who put them under the slave drivers to get maximum humiliating labor out of them. After the exodus, the Israelites spent about forty years as homeless and destitute wanderers in the wilderness. They got the first relief in their life under the leadership of Joshua when they subjugated many original occupants of the land in Canaan. The period of judges extending from ca. 1372-1065, i.e about three hundred seven years, was also an undulating period of their success and defeat. Their strong-hold on the land was established only during the second half of King David's reign. The period of glory and proper settlement of Israelites in Canaan, therefore, starts from that period and it continued only until the end of the reign of King Solomon (pbAh). It was, perhaps, during the reign of Solomon (pbAh) that the Israeli

scholars started composing some of the books such as *Exodus*, *Numbers* and a preliminary draft of the *Genesis*. *Leviticus* pertains to a much later period while *Deuteronomy*, i.e the book of law, might pertain to even later to that. It was subsequently discovered by Hilkiah, the high priest from the temple during the reign of King Josiah<sup>300</sup> (in about 623 BC).<sup>301</sup>

Due to long history of slavery and despondency, the Israelites had been suffering from inferiority complex as compared with other nations in the region. As a reaction against the said obsession, the Israelites started propagating their superiority over others by denouncing all other nations in and around Canaan. The primacy of Ishmael (pbAh) in the past and the prestige as well as possessions of his descendants in the north East, East and south of Palestine besides vast tracts of land throughout the Arabian Peninsula, was intolerable for them. To undermine the position of the major portion of the descendants of Abraham (pbAh), therefore, the Israelites made certain insertions in the Holy Book to present a perverted picture of the facts. Instead of a princess, they depicted Hagar as a slave of Sarai and Ishmael (pbAh) as a son of the slave girl. Similarly, Ishmael's dedication to the House of the Lord, the Ka'bah at Makkah, was twisted in such a manner that he was shown as a cast out or pariah. The Israelites were jealous of Ishmael (pbAh) due to his sanctification as the first human priest at the ancient house of the

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<sup>300</sup> 2Kings 22:8-10; 2Chr 34:14-28) KJV.

<sup>301</sup> A Chronology of Biblical Christianity, 1997.

Lord. Ishmael (pbAh) was the first human being dedicated to the Lord and offered as a sacrifice before Him. Similarly, Hagar his mother had the unique honor to be the first lady in the world who renounced her princely heritage in Egypt to serve the cause of the Lord. Again she had been the first woman in the world to accept her separation from her husband to stay all alone in the wilderness only to bring up Ishmael who was presented before God to serve the house of the Lord at Makkah. The sanctifying grace of Ishmael and Hagar as stated above was not acceptable to the Israelites. They, therefore, decided to do in the Holy Book with their own hands what God had not done for them. Their forgeries in the Genesis, however, failed to bring any change in the actual course of history or the predetermination by the Lord.

The Israelites pretended that Hagar was a slave of Sarai while only Isaac was the legitimate son of Abraham and the only rightful heir to the blessings and the land promised by the Lord to the descendants of Abraham. Not to talk of the natural priority and primacy of Ishmael over Isaac, or his equality with him: they even did not accept him as a legitimate brother of Isaac lest he should claim any superiority to or equality with him. In this respect even the great scholars and philosophers like Philo could not rid themselves of the slavery to their prejudice against Ishmael and his descendants. His following derogatory remarks reflect the same:

And yet before Ishmael was born and circumcised, thirteen years before birth of Isaac, and having been now weaned for more than seven years, he

was banished with his mother, because he being illegitimate was mocking the legitimate son, as though he were on terms of equality with him.<sup>302</sup>

Subsequently, St. Paul went still further to debase Hagar as a slave woman who was giving birth to her children in slavery. The comments on the same will be of interest to the readers:

According to the apostle Paul, Hagar figured in a symbolic drama in which she represented the nation or fleshly Israel, bound to Jehovah by the Law covenant inaugurated at mount Sinai, which covenant brought forth 'children for slavery.' Because of the nation's inability, due to their sinful condition, to keep the terms of that covenant, under it the Israelites did not become a free people but were condemned as sinners worthy of death, hence being slaves. (John 8:34, Rom 8:1-3) Jerusalem of Paul's day corresponded to Hagar, for Jerusalem the capital, representing the organization of natural Israel, found herself in slavery with her children. Spirit-begotten Christians, though, are children of the "Jerusalem above," God's symbolic woman. This heavenly Jerusalem, like Sarah the freewoman, has never been in slavery.<sup>303</sup>

While maligning Hagar and his descendants with slavery, St. Paul perhaps forgot that according to his own confession he was a Hebrew/Israelite (Phil 3:5) while the Israelites had been admonished repeatedly by the Lord not to forget their slavery in Egypt (Deu 15:15). In his eagerness to assert superiority of the

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<sup>302</sup> *Works of Philo* (OR USA: AGES Software Albany, Hendrickson publishers, Version 1.0, 1999), 1:523.

<sup>303</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* (Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1971), s. v. 'Hagar' p. 702,

Israelites, St. Paul forgot that while offering their harvests, the Israelites were obliged to confess as under:

And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:<sup>304</sup>

St. Paul glossed over the repeated slavery of his forefathers by numerous nations in the world. Similarly, he perhaps failed to remember the massacre, the slavery and deportation of the ten northern tribes of Israel to Nineveh and other far off lands in the north (722 BC). In 605 BC the Babylonian empire had made Judah a vassal while after their rebellion, the deported 10000 of Judah citizens to Babylonia as slaves (597 BC). Even the utter destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, massacre of a large number of Jews and deportation

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<sup>304</sup> Deu 26:5-10 KJV.

of 70000 Jews as slaves by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylonia (587 BC) could not be remembered by him. He also became oblivious of the different periods of the Israelites' slavery and subjugation under the Persians (539-333 BC), Greeks (332-167 BC) and the Romans with effect from 64 BC which was continuing till the time when St. Paul was boasting about the free birth of the Israelites as compared to the alleged slavery of the Israelites [or Ishmaelites?]. It, therefore, seems that in spite of his claim to be an Israelite, St. Paul had disowned his ancestry for his proud privilege of the citizenship of Rome. St. Paul considered himself as a Roman or a Greek due to which instead of the Jews, he claimed that gentiles or perhaps the Romans were the true Israelites.

The Jews and the Christian followers of St. Paul depict Sarah as a woman of the royal stock giving birth to free people i.e. the Israelites. St. Paul, however, was not content. Through jugglery of words, St. Paul attempted to convert the Israelites from sons of Sarah to descendants of Hagar. He says:

Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.<sup>305</sup>

It is needless to comment that allegorical suggestions as quoted above have no meanings at all. Had St. Paul been a genuine member of the Israelites, he had neither any chance to remove the slur of slavery from the face of his race nor could he succeed to transfer

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<sup>305</sup> Gal 4:24-25 KJV.

the slavery of the Israelites to others.

Aside from maligning the Israelites, St. Paul also had another axe to grind. He knew that his race was under the bondage of the law of the Lord while the city and its people were slaves of the Romans. To disown the said slavery, he termed the Israelites as descendants of Hagar. This means that he dissociated himself from the Israelites by disowning his ancestry and by pretending himself a proud citizen of Rome.

According to St. Paul, the Jews/Israelites with the city of Jerusalem were under the bondage of the law of the Lord and even otherwise in slavery which depicts them as descendants of Hagar. He, perhaps, dissociated himself from the Israelites and considered himself a proud citizen of Rome. As such, he proclaimed Romans or the Gentiles as the true Israelites (Gal 4:24-31). Addressing to the Galatians, he said:

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.<sup>306</sup>

Although, instead of the Israelites, the Gentiles were proclaimed as the true Israelites (Gal 4:24-31) yet the followers of St. Paul did not bother to take any notice of the unrealistic and unreasonable suggestion of St. Paul. For them, it was enough that St. Paul had offered the most attractive package which assured them salvation, holiness, life everlasting and living in Jesus Christ just by verbal confession of faith. By mystic union with Christ Jesus, they had attained immunity from sin and death. Besides the most

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<sup>306</sup> Gal 4:31 KJV.

attractive offer as quoted above, St. Paul also freed his followers from the stringency of the law which was unacceptable for the Hellenized society and unbearable even for the majority of the Jews.

History of the world, however, refutes effectively the baseless pretensions of St. Paul. Similarly, the theory showing Ishmael as born in the manner of flesh, and Isaac as the son of promise, is a product of St. Paul's imagination because there is nothing in the OT to support his view (Gal 4:21-23). Words can not change the facts nor can any distortion in a book undo the work of God. Consequently, all manipulations by the Israelites failed to create any real impact on history of the Arabs. It was the work of God to make Ishmael, the first born of Abraham. It was the Lord who got him separated from the family due to his dedication to Him. God made Abraham see the vision as if he was offering Ishmael to the Lord. Consequently, finding Abraham fulfilling the vision, God gracefully accepted the sacrifice and rewarded Abraham abundantly. Ishmael, therefore, spent his entire life at the ancient house of the Lord where he continued to serve as a priest till his death.

The Lord God has always preserved the sanctity of Ka'bah throughout the history of the world. It remains open for worship of the Lord for twenty four hours a day throughout the year. Millions and Millions of people visit Ka'bah for Hajj, 'Umrah, and other prayers. As against this, the central sanctuary of the Israelites, i.e. the Temple of Jerusalem, built by Solomon in about 957 BC, was destroyed in 587 BC After its reconstruction by Zerubbab, Nehemiah, and Ezra



etc., in ca. 515 BC it was dismantled and reconstructed by Herod the Great, during the second half of the first century BC and the first half of the first century AD. It, too, stood finally destroyed in 70 AD. Since then, the Jews stand dispersed throughout the world deprived of any central sanctuary to worship the Lord. As against them, Ka'bah has always enjoyed the graceful status of the only house of the Lord on earth with surety of peace in its surroundings. Presently, the descendants and followers of Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh) form about one fourth of the entire population of the world. The Israelites in spite of all their inflated figures hardly reach one percent of the Muslims. This shows that boastful claims and pretensions of the Israelites to claim themselves as descendants of Abraham (pbAh) that no one could be able to count them (Gen 16:10) miserably failed to force the hand of God in their favor.

## ISHMAEL: THE RIGHTEOUS, TENDER-HEARTED AND ENDURING

Since Abraham's prayer was specifically for a *righteous son*, therefore, God's suggestion of his name Ishmael (*God has heard*) is in itself a confirmation that the Lord granted Abraham (pbAh) the righteous son as prayed by him. This certification from the Lord repudiates the false allegations of the Israelites about quarrelsome or idolatrous character of Ishmael (pbAh). As against this, the Lord also used the appellation of حَلِيمٌ which aside from nobility, denotes 'readiness to suffer and endure'. Incidentally, it is the same title 'حَلِيمٌ' conferred by the Lord twice on Abraham (pbAh) when he said:

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ.<sup>307</sup>

Behold, Abraham was most tender-hearted, most clement [and enduring].<sup>308</sup>

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ.<sup>309</sup>

For, behold, Abraham was, most clement, most

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<sup>307</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 9:114 (*At-Tawbah*).

<sup>308</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 283.

<sup>309</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 11. 75 (*Hūd*).

tender-hearted, intent upon turning to God again and again.<sup>310</sup>

Ishmael (pbAh), therefore, shared the appellation of 'حليم' with Abraham (pbAh) which shows that he was a duplicate of his father. Due to his likeness with Abraham (pbAh), Ishmael (pbAh) too, was tender-hearted and enduring. This effectively refutes the allegation in the Genesis that Ishmael (pbAh) 'will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him;' (...).<sup>311</sup>

Falsehood of the said assertion is also obvious from the fact that the Genesis failed to adduce any evidence to prove any ferocity, quarrel or high-handedness of Ishmael against anyone in the world.

It is, therefore, clear that Ishmael who had been certified as 'Hāleem' (tender-hearted and enduring) by the Lord cannot in any case be called a 'wild man' or 'the one whose hand is against everyone and everyone's hand is against him'. Had Ishmael (pbAh) been a wild man as alleged by the Genesis he and his sons being extremely powerful as compared to Isaac (pbAh) would have deprived him of all material inheritance of Abraham (pbAh) retained by him. Instead of living in the wilderness, he would have deprived Isaac (pbAh) from his home and everything he had in Canaan. Since no such action could be reported by the Israelites, therefore, it is abundantly clear that such false accusations against Ishmael

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<sup>310</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 326.

<sup>311</sup> See Gen. 16:12 KJV.

(pbAh) and Hagar depict only an insatiable thirst of the Israelites to downgrade their rivals. It is only due to their bias against them that they continue to speak ill of Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) without looking for any justification for the same. Such an instance can also be found in the *Chumash*, which Commenting on the phrase 'he took his two young men with him' (Gen:22:3,4), records:

Abraham took Elizir and Ishmael who had come to visit him (Midrash). (...). He then turned to the two attendants and asked, 'Do you see what I see?' They did not. Noting this, Abraham put them in the same category as his donkey (next verse) and said, in effect, 'The donkey sees nothing and you see nothing, therefore, stay here with the donkey.'<sup>312</sup>

In view of such fabrications due to biased attitude of the Israelites against Lot (pbAh), Hagar, Ishmael (pbAh), Esau and the Canaanites etc., we cannot attach any credibility to their derogatory remarks against other nations around them.

According to law, Ishmael (pbAh) being the first-born of Abraham (pbAh), belonged to God.<sup>313</sup> The Lord had also said that '*you must offer every first born male to the Lord.*'<sup>314</sup> The same is also evident from the following:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,. *Sanctify unto me all the firstborn*, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man

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<sup>312</sup> *The Chumash*, ed. Rabbi Nosson Scherman, etc. (NY: Mesorah Publications Ltd, Brooklyn, 2007), p.102.

<sup>313</sup> Num. 8:17a.

<sup>314</sup> Ex. 13:12 GNB.

and of beast: it is mine.<sup>315</sup>

Factually the dedication as per commandment of the Lord had started from Ishmael (pbAh). Subsequently, the same was declared as law:

Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.<sup>316</sup>

Abraham (pbAh), therefore, hastened to separate Ishmael (pbAh) from his home along with his mother during his suckling period. After the advent of Moses (pbAh), the same tradition of Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh) was decreed as law for the Israelites.

The dedication and separation of Levites has been further stressed in Num 8:10,11,15,16. Another excerpt is afforded below:

Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.<sup>317</sup>

Factually, *Ishmael (pbAh) was the first person who being dedicated to the Lord was separated from the family* since his suckling period. As such, there was no question of Ishmael's claiming any inheritance from the worldly wealth of Abraham (pbAh), nor has the Genesis ever shown him or his descendants making any such claim during or after the life of Abraham (pbAh). There had never been any dispute over inheritance between Ishmael (pbAh) and Isaac

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<sup>315</sup> Ex. 13:1-2 KJV.

<sup>316</sup> Num 8:14 KJV.

<sup>317</sup> Ex. 22:29 KJV.

(pbAh) or their descendants. It was only the perverted thinking of some priests or scribes of the Israelites or some fear lurking in their minds that they conceived of the treacherous plot to insert the words to distort the facts in Gen 21:9-21. As such, instead of praising Ishmael (pbAh) for the sanctifying grace conferred on him by the Lord, the Israelites chose to condemn him through disinformation concocted by them.

By order of his birth, Ishmael (pbAh) belonged to God and God was everything for him. The tradition of dedication, separation from the family to stand before the Lord was, therefore, the legacy of Ishmael (pbAh). He was the first person to relinquish his inheritance for the sake of the Lord. Later on, the same tradition of Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh) became incumbent upon the Levites. The Torah has, therefore, enjoined the same omitting any reference to Ishmael (pbAh).

At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. Wherefore *Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance*, according as the LORD thy God promised him.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Deu 10:8 & 10:9 KJV.



## Chapter-22

### ISHMAEL (pbAh) THE SPIRITUAL INHERITOR OF ABRAHAM (pbAh)

Ishmael (pbAh), was dedicated to the house of the Lord from his suckling period and he spent his entire life serving at the house of the Lord at Makkah. Being dedicated to the Lord Ishmael (pbAh) had primary claim over spiritual inheritance from Abraham (pbAh). Hence, *the Lord declared him a messenger* (رسول) *while Isaac* (pbAh), *Jacob* (pbAh), *and Joseph* (pbAh) *were prophets* (نبی). Ishmael (pbAh), as such, was the first person to be appointed as the priest at the house of the Lord God of Abraham (pbAh) at Makkah which was not only the ancient but also the only house of God on the earth. Hence, being exalted to the higher spiritual status, Ishmael (pbAh) never received any inheritance from the worldly wealth of Abraham (pbAh). Though Ishmael (pbAh) and his twelve sons along with their descendants were much more numerous and powerful than Isaac (pbAh) and his two sons, yet we do not find them claiming or usurping anything from Isaac (pbAh) or his sons on the basis of inheritance from Abraham (pbAh). Only the Israelites have always remained obsessed with the inheritance of material wealth and land of Canaan from Abraham



(pbAh). Ishmael (pbAh) or his descendants claimed only the spiritual inheritance instead of anything material from the wealth of Abraham (pbAh). We, therefore, do not find any plausibility in the story of Ishmael (pbAh) playing with Isaac (pbAh) or Sarah's insistence to cast him out along-with his mother to deprive them from their inheritance from Abraham (pbAh).

It is also to be noted that for about a thousand years after Abraham (pbAh), the Israelites continued only to look after the material aspects of their lives. Even Moses (pbAh) failed to inculcate godliness in them while they continued to rebel against the Lord and the prophets repeatedly. They always assigned priority to their temporal gains over selfless obedience to the Lord and the prophets. The masses of the Israelites always failed to accept surrendering their will to the will of the Lord. Hence, after the establishment of the monarchy and consecration of the temple at Jerusalem, the priesthood of the Israelites found it expedient to exalt the temple of Jerusalem by severing its affiliation from the Ka'bah, the ancient house of the Lord venerated by all the prophets of Israel from Jacob (pbAh) to David (pbAh). During the later half of the reign of King Solomon (pbAh), the temple at Jerusalem became the sole sanctuary of the Israelites. In spite of all this they continued to offer all their sacrifices and services to the Lord facing towards south, i.e. towards the Ka'bah at Makkah. Subsequent generations of the Israelites, however, had no idea why the priests were facing towards the south while offering their oblations before the Lord.

The period of respite, peace, prosperity, power and prestige during the reign of Solomon (pbAh) and some of his descendants later on was, perhaps, the time when the priesthood at Jerusalem thought of depriving the Ishmaelites of the sanctifying grace and the glory due to their priesthood of the Ka'bah. They, therefore, resorted to willful distortion of the text of the OT by presenting a perverted picture of Ishmael (pbAh) to humiliate his descendants and to pretend the supremacy of the Israelites over them.

Since Ishmael (pbAh) was the first born of Abraham (pbAh), therefore, he was yet a teen-ager when Abraham (pbAh) saw the vision as if he was offering him as a sacrifice before the Lord. Subsequently, when both Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh) submitted their wills to Allah and Abraham (pbAh) laid Ishmael (pbAh) prostrate on his forehead for the sacrifice that the Lord called out to him '*You have fulfilled the vision*' because this was obviously a trial for them. It was further said that:

وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ. وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ. سَلَامٌ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ. كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ. إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. وَبَشَرْنَاهُ إِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِنْ الصَّالِحِينَ.<sup>319</sup>

And We ransomed him with a tremendous sacrifice, And left him thus to be remembered among later generations: 'Peace be upon Abraham!' Thus do We *reward* the doers of good-for he was truly one of our believing Servants. And [in time] We gave him the glad tidings of Isaac, [who, too, would be] a prophet, one of the righteous;<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 37:107-112.

<sup>320</sup> Allamah Asad, *The Message*, 1980, p. 688f.

Two points in the verses of the Qur'ān quoted above are of vital importance:

i) The Lord God graciously accepted the sacrifice and ransomed Ishmael (pbAh) with a tremendous sacrifice. The blessing was left for him among his generations (to come) in later times. There is hardly any doubt that Almighty Allah left the said blessings only among the descendants of Ishmael primarily at Makkah and later on among his followers throughout the world. Since the Lord did not leave the said blessings among the descendants of Isaac (pbAh), therefore, he was not the true victim of the sacrifice.

11) It was after the acceptance of the said sacrifice that the Lord God rewarded Abraham (pbAh) in many ways including the good news of 'Isaac (pbAh) – a prophet – one of the righteous'. The said verse of the Qur'ān, therefore, denies the sacrifice of Isaac (pbAh) who was not born till then. *Had Isaac (pbAh) been the victim of the sacrifice, there would have been no sense in giving the good news of his birth after the episode of the sacrifice and as a reward for the said oblation.*<sup>321</sup> As such, good news about the birth of Isaac (pbAh), was a reward to Abraham (pbAh) for the sacrifice of Ishmael (pbAh) offered by him.

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<sup>321</sup> Al-Qur'an 37:110-112.

## ISHMAEL THE SON OF PROMISE

Abraham (pbAh) being childless at the time of leaving his homeland at the advanced stage of his life, had prayed to the Almighty for the grant of a son. God granted his prayer and promised him a son to become a great nation and to have a profound progeny. Hence the birth of Ishmael. Sarah and Hagar had neither prayed for a son nor had they been promised any. Abraham (pbAh) was contented with the fulfillment of this promise so much so that he did not show any excitement or happiness at the news of the grant of a second son, Isaac. He was rather disturbed at this news and exclaimed, '*O, that Ishmael might live before thee!*' Had there been any promise of a son extended to Sarah by God, her wish to make Hagar a surrogate mother to extract a son out of her for herself might have been a sheer lack of faith on Sarah's part. On the other hand the Israelites refuse Ishmael's being the son of promise. They feel themselves relegated to a secondary position in case they accept Ishmael as the 'son of promise' and a 'prime successor to Abraham (pbAh)'. In the present chapter an attempt has been made to study the claim of the Israelites and to thrash out the factual position.

It was the distress of both Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah that they were childless. So the good news of a child could be the requisite relief to their age-long distress. It may however be noted here that it was only Abraham, and not Sarah, who is reported to have

prayed for a son; and similarly it was Abraham, and not Sarah, who was promised<sup>322</sup> the child:

And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.<sup>323</sup> And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.<sup>324</sup>

This promise did not mention anywhere that the said child would be born to Sarah. Had there been any promise pertaining to the child to be born of Sarah, it would have been mandatory for Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah to wait for the fulfillment of that promise. Only Sarah's lack of faith in God would have allowed her to make Hagar a surrogate mother with the intention that Sarah may adopt the boy as her own son. Such impatience and lack of faith in God is quite unbecoming on the part of a lady of noble Sarah's caliber.

The Qur'ān, too, has affirmed that it was Abraham, and not Sarah who prayed for a son at the time of

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<sup>322</sup> It be noted here that the word 'promise' is a different word from the word 'news' or 'good news'; and has different connotation. Sarah had never been 'promised' a son. It was Abraham who was promised a son and the context of extending this promise clearly reveals that it was concerning Ishmael, and not concerning Isaac.

<sup>323</sup> It is unbelievable that Abraham (pbAh) could have used such a plaintive and arrogant language against God Almighty. Such unbecoming statements render the authenticity of the Bible dubious.

<sup>324</sup> The Bible, Gen. 15:3-4.

leaving his family, his people, and his homeland at Ur:

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٣٢٥﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٢٦﴾ فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٢٧﴾

And [Abraham] said: 'Verily, I shall [leave this land and] go wherever my Sustainer will guide me!' [And he prayed:] 'O my Sustainer! Bestow upon me the gift of [a son who shall be] one of the righteous!' whereupon We gave him the glad tiding of a boy-child gentle<sup>326</sup> [like himself].<sup>327</sup>

The actual Arabic word 'حليم' (hālim) according to *Ibn Fāris*, p. 259, means: 'not enraged' (خلاف طيش); 'bulky', as in: (يعير حليم، أي سمين). Lane explains:

Having 'حلم' (hāilm) [i.e. endurance, or clemency, etc; enduring, or clement, etc.]. 'الحليم' is one of the names of God; meaning [...] He Whom the disobedience of the disobedient does not flurry [agitate] nor anger against them disquiet. (1:633). 'حلم' = he was, or became, moderate, gentle, deliberate, (...), patient (as meaning contr. of hasty), grave, staid (of sober and quiet character), sedate, or calm; and intelligent: or he managed his soul and temper on the occasions of excitement of anger. (Tāj al-'Urūs). (....) became fat and compact; said of a child. (1: 632).<sup>328</sup>

Hans Vehr explains this word and its root as below:

<sup>325</sup> The Holy Qur'ān: al-Sāffāt 37: 99-101.

<sup>326</sup> The Arabic word 'hālim' would rather mean: 'enduring, sober, intelligent, fat and compact', as explained just above.

<sup>327</sup> Allamah Muḥammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān* (GIBRALTER: DAR AL-ANDALUS, 1980), p. 687, 88.

<sup>328</sup> Lane's *Arabic- Eng. Lexicon* (Camb., 1984), 1: 632,633.

'حلم' (hilm): gentleness, patience, insight, reason, understanding, intelligence, to attain puberty, mild-tempered, etc.<sup>329</sup>

The Qur'ān has used 'أحلامهم' in al-Tūr 52:32 in the sense of 'عقولهم' (their intellect, minds) as explained by *al-Jalālayn*. In Hūd 11:87, it has been used as 'لأنت الحكيم الرشيد', where it obviously means 'wise'. Dar al-Chorus, Lebanon (p.163), like almost all others, translates it: 'you are the wise and gracious man!'.

It can thus be concluded that 'حليم' would mean:

Who attains puberty at early age; who managed his soul and temper on the occasions of excitement of anger, fat and compact; of sober and quiet character, calm and intelligent; deliberate; 'ready to suffer and endure'

It shows that this good news pertains only to Ishmael who is the epitome and exact object of all the above mentioned attributes, whereas these traits are not pertinent to Isaac.

It is evident from the above that it was not Hagar who prayed for a child, but it was Abraham (pbAh) who supplicated for a righteous child. The Lord accepted his prayer and granted him his first born son from Hagar when Abraham (pbAh) was 86 years old. Thus, the promise of the Lord vide Gen. 12:1-2<sup>330</sup> and 15:4-5<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Hans Vehr, A Dic of Modern Written Arabic, ed J. Milton Cowan, (NY: Spoken Language Services, Inc.1976), 202.

<sup>330</sup> Gen 12:1-2 KJV says:

Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

stood fulfilled through the birth of Ishmael (pbAh). Even the name 'Ishmael' (God has heard) was given by the Lord Himself, which is the everlasting evidence to the fact that Ishmael was the son promised by the Lord subsequent upon Abraham's prayers. Ishmael (pbAh) was, therefore, the prime successor of Abraham (pbAh) and the rightful heir as certified by the Lord (Gen 15:5; 17:23<sup>332</sup>; and 21:13<sup>333</sup>).

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And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.

It means that at the time of Abraham's migration from his homeland to the holy land God promised him to be a great nation. The promise obviously pertains to the first-born, Ishmael. Had it pertained to Isaac, God would have told that the great nation shall be out of Isaac, his second one.

<sup>331</sup> Gen 15:4-5 KJV asserts:

And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house [Eliezer of Damascus] is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he *that shall come forth out of thine own bowels* [stress added] shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

This assertion clarifies that (1) It was Abraham (pbAh) who prayed for a heir; (2) The heir shall be Abraham's own son out of his own seed; (3) He would be the progenitor of such a great nation whom nobody will be able to count. Now (a) God has used 'thy seed' for Ishmael a number of times in the Bible; and (2) it is the progeny of Ishmael (pbAh) for which the words countless as the stars of heaven can physically be applied and not for the progeny of Isaac (pbAh) which is of quite a limited number.

<sup>332</sup> Gen 17:23 KJV explains:

And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every



But the Israelites do not admit that Ishmael (pbAh) was 'the son of promise' granted to Abraham (pbAh) in response to his prayers. By admitting Ishmael (pbAh) as the first-born one and the son of promise, they feel relegated to the secondary position in respect of the inheritance of blessings and the land promised to the descendants of Abraham (pbAh). They, therefore, amended the Holy Book to accord with their wishes. Contrary to their whims and wishes and ambitions, all the promises of the Lord in favour of the Ishmaelites were fulfilled verbatim.

As regards the news concerning the birth of Isaac, the Bible narrates that it was after the covenant of circumcision that it was delivered to Abraham (pbAh):

God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, (...). And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!<sup>334</sup>

The phrase '*give thee a son also of her*' (and esp. the

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male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

It means that Ishmael bore the sign of covenant even before the birth of Isaac.

<sup>333</sup> And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed (Gen 21:13 KJV).

<sup>334</sup> Gen. 17:15-18 KJV.

word 'also') shows that Abraham (pbAh) already had a son and the promise of the Lord with Abraham (pbAh) had already been fulfilled in the birth of Ishmael. Isaac was, therefore, 'the son of reward' given by the Lord to Abraham (pbAh) in consequence to his absolute submission before the will of the Lord. The verses of the Qur'ān 37:110-112 as quoted earlier certify the same. Isaac's birth was not promised prior to the sacrifice of Ishmael. The good news disclosed abruptly to Sarah and Abraham (pbAh) was, therefore, taken by them by surprise. It was unconceivable for them, so they laughed at it. Abraham (pbAh) rather expressed his anxiety saying '*O that Ishmael might live before thee!*' (Gen. 17:18). Had Isaac been the son of promise as expressed by St. Paul (Gal. 4:23), Abraham (pbAh) and Sarah could not have laughed and surprised at this good news.

It is to be noted that the Genesis has reported this tradition from two different sources due to which there exists much difference between the narrative of Gen 17:15-18 and Gen 18:11-15. The word of God in the Qur'ān, however, endorses some contents of the second source, i.e. Gen 18:11-15. It was after the episode of the sacrifice of Ishmael when the angels of the Lord entered unto Abraham (pbAh) to give him the glad tidings of a son. Their actual destination was the people of Lūt (pbAh) (the people of Sodom and Gomorrah) as stated below:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ  
بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيدٍ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَىٰ أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً  
قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لُّوطٍ ۖ وَأَمْرُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحَكْتُ مَبْشَرِنَاهَا  
بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ ۖ قَالَتْ يَا وَيْلَتَىٰ أَأَلِدُ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ وَهَٰذَا

بَعَلِي شَيْخًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ ﴿٣٣٥﴾ قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحِمْتُ اللَّهَ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ ﴿٣٣٦﴾ فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَى يُجَادِلُنَا فِي قَوْمِ لُوطٍ ﴿٣٣٥﴾

There came Our messengers to Abraham with glad tidings. They said, 'Peace!' He answered, 'Peace!' and hastened to entertain them with a roasted calf. But when he saw their hands went not towards (the meal), he felt some mistrust of them, and conceived a fear of them. They said: 'Fear not: We have been sent against the people of Lūt.' And his wife was standing (there), and she laughed: But we gave her glad tidings of Isaac, and after him, of Jacob. She said: 'Alas for me! shall I bear a child, seeing I am an old woman, and my husband here is an old man? That would indeed be a wonderful thing!' They said: 'Dost thou wonder at Allah's decree? The grace of Allah and His blessings on you, O ye people of the house! for He is indeed worthy of all praise, full of all glory!' When fear had passed from (the mind of) Abraham and the glad tidings had reached him, he began to plead with us for Lūt's people'.<sup>336</sup>

At another place the story has been told in the Qur'ān in the following words:

وَنَبِّئُهُمْ عَنْ صَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٣٣٧﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ إِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجَلُونَ ﴿٣٣٨﴾ قَالُوا لَا تَوْحَلْ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَبَشِّرْتُمُونِي عَلَى أَنْ مَسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فِيمَ نُبَشِّرُونَ ﴿٣٤٠﴾ قَالُوا بَشِّرْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْقَانِطِينَ ﴿٣٤١﴾ قَالَ وَمَنْ يَقْطُطُ مِن رَّحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٣٣٧﴾

Tell them about the guests of Abraham. When they

<sup>335</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Hūd: 11:69-74.

<sup>336</sup> *The Holy Qur'ān*, Tr. A. Yusuf Ali (Beirut: Dar al- Qur'ān al-Karim, 1403 AH), p. 532-34.

<sup>337</sup> Al-Qur'ān, al-Hijr 15:51-56.

entered his presence and said, 'Peace!' He said, 'We feel afraid of you!' They said: 'Fear not! We give thee glad tidings of a son endowed with wisdom.' He said: 'Do ye give me glad tidings that old age has seized me? Of what, then, is your good news?' They said: 'We give thee glad tidings in truth: be not then in despair!' He said: 'And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, but such as go astray?'<sup>338</sup>

The Qur'ān has described the event at another place in the following words:

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٣٣٨﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٣٣٩﴾ فَرَاغَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ ﴿٣٤٠﴾ فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٣٤١﴾ فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَحْزَنْ وَبَشِّرْهُ بِغُلَامٍ عَالِمٍ ﴿٣٤٢﴾ فَأَقْبَلَتْ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَّةٍ فَصَكَّتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ ﴿٣٤٣﴾ قَالُوا كَذَلِكِ قَالَ رَبُّكِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٤٤﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣٤٥﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٤٦﴾

Has the story reached thee, of the honoured guests of Abraham? Behold, they entered his presence, and said: 'Peace!' He said, 'Peace!' (and thought, 'These seem) unusual people.' Then he turned quickly to his household, brought out a fatted calf, and placed it before them. He said, 'Will ye not eat?' (When they did not eat), He conceived a fear of them. They said, 'Fear not,' and they gave him glad tidings of a son endowed with knowledge. But his wife came forward (laughing) aloud: *she smote her forehead and said: 'A barren old woman!'* They said, 'Even so has thy Lord spoken: and He is full of Wisdom and Knowledge.' (Abraham) said: 'And what, O ye Messengers, is your errand (now)?' They said, 'We

<sup>338</sup> *The Holy Qur'ān*, Tr. A. Yusuf Ali (Beirut: Dar al- Qur'ān al-Karim, 1403 AH), p. 646-47.

<sup>339</sup> Al-Qur'ān, al-Dhāriyāt: 51.24-32.

have been sent to a people (deep) in sin;<sup>340</sup>

Two points of difference are to be noted in the narratives of the Bible and the Qur'ān:

a) According to the Qur'ān the guests of Abraham (pbAh) were angels, who were not accompanied by God, whereas the Bible asserts:

and the Lord appeared to him in the plains of Mamre:  
and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day,  
and he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men  
stood by him:<sup>341</sup>

It shows that there were three visitors, one of whom being God Himself.

b) According to the Qur'ān Abraham (pbAh) brought before them a roasted calf, but they, being angels, did not eat of it. The Bible, however, asserts that God and the angels did eat (Gen. 18:8).

It shows that the Bible's God was some mythological God: anthropomorphically eating, drinking, lacking knowledge and walking over the earth on his feet just like human beings.

According to both, the Bible and the Qur'ān, Sarah and Abraham (pbAh) were neither waiting for the fulfillment of any promise nor expecting the birth of another son. On the other hand the good news about the birth of Isaac took them by surprise. Abraham (pbAh) perhaps did not like it and retorted with the words 'O that Ishmael might live before thee!' (Gen. 17:18). Sarah, too, was perturbed with the news and

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<sup>340</sup> *The Holy Qur'ān*, Tr. A. Yusuf Ali (Beirut: Dar al- Qur'ān al-Karim, 1403 AH), p. 1423-25.

<sup>341</sup> Gen. 18:1-2.

simply laughed at it.

At the time of leaving his homeland (Ur), Abraham (pbAh) had implored the Lord to grant him a righteous son. The Lord responded to the request and promised him to give a boy 'ready to suffer and endure':

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٣٤٣﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٤٤﴾ فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٤٥﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمُرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٣٤٦﴾ فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ ﴿٣٤٧﴾ وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿٣٤٨﴾ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٤٩﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبْتَلَىٰ ﴿٣٥٠﴾ وَقَدْ بَشَّرْنَاكَ بِذِيحِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٥١﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٣٥٢﴾ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٣٥٣﴾ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٥٤﴾ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٥٥﴾ وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٥٦﴾

Abraham said: 'I am going to my Lord;<sup>343</sup> He will guide me. Lord, grant me a righteous son,' (In response to this prayer) We gave him the good news of a prudent<sup>344</sup> boy [Ishmael (pbAh)]; and when he was old enough to go about and work with him, (one day) Abraham said to him: 'My son, I see

<sup>342</sup> The Holy Qur'ān, al-Sāffāt 37:99-113.

<sup>343</sup> Abraham's statement meant that he was forsaking his own home as well as his homeland in God's cause.

<sup>344</sup> The Qur'ān says that he was a 'حَلِيم' (hālīm) youth (al-Sāffāt 37:101), which means 'sagacious, mature, and enduring'. Lane's *Arabic-Eng. Lexicon* (Camb, 1984) has explained this word at p. 1:632, which, alongwith some other explanations, has been reproduced at the third page of this chapter.

It may also be noted here that the context, in which this word 'حَلِيم' (hālīm) has been used here, has a specific reference to the 'Sacrifice'. How submissively and resolutely Ishmael surrendered himself for the 'Sacrifice'!

in my dream that I am slaughtering you. So consider (and tell me) what you think.' He said: 'Do as you are bidden. You will find me, if Allah so wills, among the steadfast.' When both surrendered (to Allah's command) and Abraham flung the son down on his forehead, We cried out: 'O Abraham, you have indeed fulfilled your dream. Thus do We reward the good-doers.' This was indeed a plain trial. And We ransomed him with a mighty<sup>345</sup> sacrifice, and We preserved for him a good name among posterity.<sup>346</sup> Peace be upon Abraham. Thus do We reward the good-doers. Surely he was one of Our believing servants. And We gave him the good news of Isaac<sup>347</sup>, a Prophet among the righteous

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<sup>345</sup> The original Qur'ānic word 'عَظِيمٍ' ('Azīm) does not only mean 'mighty' but also 'significant, important, grand, glorious' (Hans Vehr's 'A Dic of Mod. Written Arabic', 1976, p. 623).

<sup>346</sup> 'Allamah Muḥammad Asad, in his 'The Message' (footnote 43, p.688) explains:

The epithet 'Azīm ('tremendous' or 'mighty') renders it improbable that this sacrifice refers to nothing but the ram which Abraham subsequently found and slaughtered in Ishmael's stead (Gen xxii:13). To my mind, the sacrifice spoken of here is the one repeated every year by countless believers in connection with the pilgrimage of Mecca (*al-hajj*), which, in itself, commemorates the experience of Abraham and Ishmael and constitutes one of the 'five pillars' of Islam.

<sup>347</sup> This shows that, according to the Qur'ān, the good news of Isaac's birth was given after the event of the Offering of Ishmael, which has just been mentioned above in a fair detail, and as a reward of the total submission of Abraham in carrying out the command for sacrifice of his 'Only Son'. It clearly asserts that the 'Only Son' offered for Sacrifice was Ishmael, and not Isaac.

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These verses explain the flow of the events of the episode in a reasonable manner:

Leaving his homeland for the cause of Allah Abraham seeks His guidance (v.99).

He prays to Allah to grant him a righteous son (v 100).

God gave him the good news of a prudent, moderate, and enduring son who, subsequently, surrendered himself for the sacrifice willingly (vv 101f).

When both Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh) resolutely set to comply with the command of offering, Allah said; 'O Abraham, [as if] you have indeed fulfilled your dream. Thus do We reward the good-doers. This was indeed a plain trial.' (vv 103-106)

God asserted once again: 'Thus do We reward the good-doers.' (v 110). And in v 112 He explained this reward in the words: '*And We gave him the good news [of the birth] of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous ones*'.

Thus, according to the Qur'ān, the sequence of the events is:

While migrating from his Mesopotamian homeland► Abraham (pbAh) supplicated God for a righteous son► God gave him the good news of a prudent son► subsequently Abraham was asked to offer this son for sacrifice► both Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael willingly agreed to comply with the command► God

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<sup>348</sup> S. A. A. Mawdūdī, *Towards Understanding the Qur'ān*, Eng Tr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2011), p. 921-23.



pronounced: O Abraham, You have fulfilled the dream; We shall befittingly reward you in Our own way (because it was an obvious trial) ► i.e. We give you the good news of the birth of Isaac, who shall be a righteous Prophet.

It clearly shows that:

According to the Qur'ān the good news of the birth of Isaac was given to Abraham (pbAh) as a reward for the compliance with the order of sacrifice. On the other hand, according to the Bible, it accompanied the nasty and unholy event of the destruction and curse for Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Bible tells us that while on their way to Canaan, Terah<sup>349</sup> and Abraham (pbAh) settled for some time at Haran. It was at Haran that the Lord told Abraham to leave for another land while promising to make him a great nation and a blessing for all the families of the earth. At Canaan, the Lord repeated His promise, saying 'unto *thy seed*, I will give this land' (Gen. 12:17). Subsequently, the Lord appeared to Abraham (pbAh) in a vision and said: 'fear not Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward' (Gen. 15:1). Observing a dismay in the reply of Abraham (pbAh), the Lord told him that Eliezer shall not be his heir:

This shall not be thine heir; but *he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels* shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be

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<sup>349</sup> According to Gen 11:24-32, Terah was the son of Nahor and father of Abraham. He migrated with his family from Ur to go to Canaan, but settled in Haran instead, where he died (McKenzie, 880).

able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.<sup>350</sup>

There is another assurance in the following verses:

And I will make my covenant *between me and thee*, and will multiply thee exceedingly. (...). As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan<sup>351</sup>, for an everlasting possession; and I will

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<sup>350</sup> Gen. 15:4-5 KJV.

<sup>351</sup> '*All the land of Canaan*' looks to be a later addition and quite out of context. As to being '*an everlasting possession*' it is obviously contrary to the factual position with regard to Israel. Four thousand years have passed henceforth. Out of these 40 centuries, it saw the fully independent Israelite rule on it (Canaan) only for five centuries (ca 1,000 BC-586 BC), which make only 13% of the time lapsed so far. Is 'one eighth' an 'everlasting possession'? Thus the promise or prediction did not happen to be materialized, and the ground reality is contrary to it. Deu 18:21-22 asserts:

And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously:

It means that either God had pronounced a false promise or Abraham (pbAh) is presumptuous: both of which cannot

be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you<sup>352</sup> shall be circumcised.<sup>353</sup>

It is to be noted that God had made the promise with Abraham (pbAh) to make him a great nation (Gen. 12:2). The same promise had been made with regard to Hagar when God said 'And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation because he is thy seed'<sup>354</sup>. As such, the person certified by the Lord as 'Seed of Abraham' was Ishmael. Similarly, the other assurance of great nation, too, was given to Hagar when God said: 'Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation'.<sup>355</sup> Earlier to that, in response to Abraham's prayer about Ishmael, the Lord had said:

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and

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even be conceived. Obviously it is the fabrication of some crafty redactor. On the other hand the Arabian Peninsula has, of course, remained the 'everlasting possession' of the Arabs, the progeny of Ishmael (pbAh).

<sup>352</sup> This covenant, too, is being literally observed in true sense of the word, by the Muslims and the progeny of Ishmael (pbAh). Overwhelming majority of the followers of the Israelite faith, i.e. the Christians, do not, at all, observe this covenant. Only a negligible number of the professors of the Biblical faith, the Jews, observe it.

<sup>353</sup> Gen. 17:2, 4-10 KJV.

<sup>354</sup> Gen. 21:13 KJV.

<sup>355</sup> Gen 21:18 KJV.

will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.<sup>356</sup>

This proves in unequivocal terms that God's promise of making Abraham (pbAh) a great nation primarily pertained to Ishmael (pbAh). The said promise of making a great nation was never made with Sarah or Isaac (pbAh). As for Isaac (pbAh), the promise was to make Sarah, mother of many nations<sup>357</sup>, and kings of people shall be of her (Gen. 17:16). This, too, can be considered as fulfilled in Isaac (pbAh), her son, as being the ancestor of the Israelites and the Edomites. One can take them for many nations who definitely had kings of people in them. In spite of the boastful claims of the Israelites, they did not qualify to be called 'a great nation' due to the fact that during major period of their history, they remained enslaved, defeated or subjugated by many other nations in the region. Their period of glory was short-lived and ultimately, they were dispersed throughout the nations of the world. It is also worth noting that in the annals of history, when they were not enslaved or subjugated by other nations, and had their own independent states, even then they were neither quantitatively great nor qualitatively. The golden period of the history of the Israelites was that of King David and King Solomon. Even in that period China, India, Arabia, Egypt, European nations, etc. were numerically and strength-wise greater than the Israelites.

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<sup>356</sup> Gen. 17:20 KJV.

<sup>357</sup> It be noted here that the promise does not say 'a great nation'. It only says 'many nations', which, obviously, does not stand for 'a great nation'.

As regards the promise of the Lord with Abraham (pbAh) to 'multiply thee exceedingly' (Gen. 17:4) and 'to make thee exceeding fruitful', the same has also been reaffirmed to Ishmael (pbAh) in almost the same words which give an edge to Ishmael (pbAh) over Isaac (pbAh). In addition to the above, the Lord foretold Abraham (pbAh) about Ishmael (pbAh) that 'twelve princes shall he have' (Gen. 17:20). As such, when the Lord himself promises twelve princes as sons of Ishmael (pbAh), the said promise also confirms the royal status of Ishmael (pbAh) and Hagar. The promise of princes as descendants was not made with Isaac (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh) or Esau. It was long after them that the descendants of Esau became kings in their respective lands. Similarly, about 600 years after the death of Isaac, Saul became the first king among the Israelites. Even then, the sovereignty of the Israelites was limited both in the terms of time and space as compared to ever expanding and everlasting suzerainty of the descendants of Ishmael (pbAh).

## PRAYERS OF ABRAHAM (pBAh) FOR THE DESCENDANTS OF HAGAR

The Bible has given us no account of the faith and teachings of Abraham (pBAh). Similarly, it is silent about any prayers made by him. The Qur'ān, on the other hand, reveals the faith and tests and trials of Abraham (pBAh) in detail. Besides his faith, the Qur'ān also records certain prayers of Abraham (pBAh) which reflect the background of Makkah. The prayers, therefore, pertained to his descendants in that region. It is a matter of concern that the redactors of the Bible have not recorded any of Abraham's prayers having their background in Canaan. It is further to be regretted that no prayers of Abraham (pBAh) have been recorded therein in favor of the descendants of Isaac (pBAh). On the one hand it shows the complete disregard and unconcern of the Israelites and their spokespersons—the redactors of the Bible—towards the propagation, promotion and continuation of his mission, i.e. worship of the one and the only Lord God of the universe; rejecting all the other false gods, and the worship of the idols: and on the other hand, such prayers show Abraham's deep concern for these ideals.

It is an established fact that Ishmael (pBAh) was the

only son of Abraham (pbAh) who participated with him: (i) in the covenant of circumcision, (ii) in raising the walls of the Ka'bah, (iii) in the dedication of the first-born to the house of the Lord, (iv) in the sacrifice, (v) in Hājj and Sa'y and (vi) in the overall assignment of keeping the Ka'bah clean and purified from the abominations, and (vii) to implement commandments of the Lord as detailed in the Qur'ān 22:25-36. It is, therefore, quite natural that most of Abraham's prayers related to Ishmael (pbAh) and his descendants at Makkah. The perfect and actual fulfillment of those prayers in the history is, therefore, the ineradicable proof for the acceptance of the prayers of Abraham (pbAh) about the Ka'bah, Makkah, the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) through Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) as enumerated below.

## I - THE GENTLE SON READY TO SUFFER AND ENDURE:

As stated earlier, while leaving Ur for Canaan, Abraham (pbAh) had prayed 'رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ', i.e. 'O my Lord grant me a righteous son'.<sup>358</sup> The Lord responded in the following words:

فَبَشِّرْنَاهُ بِعُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ.<sup>359</sup>

So we gave him good news of a boy ready to suffer and endure.

Similarly, the Lord gave an immediate response to him when he exclaimed: 'O that Ishmael might live

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<sup>358</sup> Al-Qur'ān 37:100.

<sup>359</sup> Al-Qur'ān 37:101.

before thee.' He said:

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.<sup>360</sup>

It is worth noting here that in the case of Sarah, the Lord had promised to bless her (in future):

And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.<sup>361</sup>

Whereas in the case of Ishmael (pbAh), the Lord categorically affirmed to Abraham (pbAh) that his supplication had been granted there and then, without pending it to be granted and fulfilled at some later stage in future. So He spontaneously observed:

I have heard thee, behold I have blessed him.<sup>362</sup>

These words of the verse have been rendered by the *New American Bible*, as: 'I hereby bless him'. This shows that the Lord blessed Ishmael (pbAh) *there and then* while in the case of Sarah, it was a promise to bless her *in the future*.

## II – THE LEADERS OF HUMANKIND

The Qur'ān reveals that God tried Abraham (pbAh) with certain 'كلمات' (words) which he fulfilled. The Lord said: 'I will make you an *Imām* of the

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<sup>360</sup> Gen 17:20 KJV.

<sup>361</sup> Gen. 17:16.

<sup>362</sup> Gen. 17:20 KJV.



nations.<sup>363</sup> Abraham (pbAh) pleaded: 'and also *imāms* from my offspring.'<sup>364</sup> He answered: '*but my promise is not within the reach of evil-doers.*'<sup>365</sup> It was at Makkah that the Lord said:

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ.<sup>366</sup>

And Lo! We made the Temple [House of the Lord] a goal [a place of assembly] to which people might repair again and again, and a sanctuary: take, then, the place whereon Abraham once stood (مقام إبراهيم) as your place of prayer. And thus did We command Abraham and Ishmael: 'Purify My Temple for those who will walk around it, and those who will abide near it in meditation, and those who will bow down and prostrate themselves [in prayer].'<sup>367</sup>

It clearly shows that the Lord covenanted only with Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh) to sanctify the House of the Lord at Makkah. It was the declared station of Abraham (pbAh) and had to be kept neat and clean for those who circumambulate it or bow and prostrate themselves before the Lord. Consequently, the descendants/followers of Abraham (pbAh) in the past and *Khādim-ul-Hāramayn al-Sharīfayn* in the present times have been performing this prestigious duty in a marvelous manner.

<sup>363</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:124: قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا

<sup>364</sup> Ibid: قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي

<sup>365</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:124: قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

<sup>366</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 2.125 (*Al-Baqara*).

<sup>367</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p.26f.

### III – THE CITY OF PEACE; PEOPLE TO BE FED WITH FRUITS

Abraham (pbAh) had also prayed to the Lord that:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَى عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ.<sup>368</sup>

And, lo, Abraham prayed: 'O my Sustainer! make this a land secure [City of Peace], and grant its people fruitful sustenance - such of them as believe in God and the Last Day.' [God] answered: 'And whoever shall deny the truth, him I will let enjoy himself for a short - but in the end I shall drive him to suffering through fire: and how vile a journey's end!'<sup>369</sup>

There is no doubt that the said city of peace is Makkah about which the prayer was made. The same has been repeated in the following:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ. رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ أَضَلَلْنِي كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ. رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ.<sup>370</sup>

And [remember the time] when Abraham spoke [thus]: 'O my Sustainer! *make this land secure, and preserve me and my children from ever worshipping idols.* (...).' 'O our Sustainer! Behold, I have settled some of my offspring in a valley in which there is no arable land, close to Thy sanctified Temple, so that,

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<sup>368</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 2.126 (Al-Baqara).

<sup>369</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p.27.

<sup>370</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 14:35-37 (*Abraham*)

O our Sustainer, *they might devote themselves to Prayer*: cause Thou, therefore, people's hearts to incline towards them, and grant them fruitful sustenance, so that they might have cause to be grateful.<sup>371</sup>

History testifies to the fact that only Makkah was the valley without cultivation (وَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ). The same was the city of peace and security (رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا) where Abraham (pbAh) made some of his offspring to dwell (رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ). The descendants of Ishmael (pbAh) have been loved and respected by all the people in Arabia (فَجَعَلْنَا أَفْقِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ) (نَهَوِي إِلَيْهِمْ). Only the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) from Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) had been establishing regular prayers since the time of Abraham (pbAh) till today (رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ).

#### IV. THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PRAYERS AT MAKKAH

The following prayers of Abraham (pbAh) were also fulfilled at Makkah:

- 1) Protection from worshipping the idols
- 2) Establishing regular prayers
- 3) Love for descendants of Abraham (pbAh)
- 4) Feeding them with fruits

The prayers of Abraham (pbAh) mentioned above have been graciously accepted by the Almighty Allah for the benefit of the descendants of Abraham (pbAh) and

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<sup>371</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 378f.

Ishmael (pbAh) at Makkah. He made it a city of peace and always continued to feed its citizens as well as the pilgrims with all sorts of fruits throughout the year. People throughout Arabian Peninsula and from other parts of the world, have always loved them and held them in great esteem. Since the time of Abraham (pbAh), the Arabs worshiped no one but Allah and Ka'bah remained free from the worship of idols except for an interruption of about 200 years when 'Amr bin Luhayy got control of the city and expelled the Quraysh from there. Even during that time, a small number of pious citizens of Makkah continued to stick to the faith of Abraham (pbAh) and refrained from idolatry. After the conquest of Makkah by the Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) in 8<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah, about AD 630, there has been no instance of worshiping idols in the Ka'bah or anywhere in the world by the Muslims who stick to the religion of Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Moses (pbAh), Jesus (pbAh) and all other Prophets as strict monotheists having no other object of worship except the one and the only Lord God of the universe. This prayer, too, stood fulfilled entirely in the descendants/followers of Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) at Makkah.

## V. KA'BAH AS THE HOUSE OF PRAYER

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ  
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ.<sup>372</sup>

And remember when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House (With this prayer):

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<sup>372</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 2.127 (Al-Baqarah).

'Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: For Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing.'

The prayer was fulfilled wholly in the descendants and followers of Ishmael (pbAh) because the Almighty Allah graciously accepted the service of raising the walls of the Ka'bah. Hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world continue to visit the Ka'bah at Makkah to worship Allah there day and night throughout the year. During the Hājj, however, the number of the pilgrims rises to millions of the believers. The Ka'bah is, therefore, the only place on the planet earth where people continue to pray, to perform Sa'y (brisk walk between Mount Sāfā and Mount Marwah), to circumambulate the Ka'bah, to stay for *I'tikāf* and to recite the Qur'ān during all the hours of day and night without any brake. About 92 gates of the Ka'bah remain open for 24 hours every day and the pilgrims continue to circumambulate the Ka'bah at all times throughout the year. There can be no better proof of the acceptance of the services rendered by Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh) than that.

## VI. ABRAHAM'S PRAYER FOR HIS FOLLOWERS & DESCENDANTS

Abraham (pbAh) also made another prayer for his descendants as under:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ  
الدُّعَاءِ. رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءَ. رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي  
وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 14:39-41.

39 All praise is due to God, Who has bestowed upon me, in my old age, Ishma'el and Isaac! Behold, my Sustainer hears indeed all Prayer: 40 [hence,] O my Sustainer, cause me and [some] of my offspring to remain constant in Prayer! And, O our Sustainer, accept this my prayer: 41 Grant Thy Forgiveness unto me, and my parents, and all the Believers, on the Day on which the [last] reckoning will come to pass!<sup>374</sup>

Though the prayer covers both Ishmael (pbAh) and Isaac (pbAh), yet it is only the Muslim descendants of Ishmael (pbAh) who have established regular prayers five times a day at the Ka'bah and, of course, in the mosques, and, at different places other than the regular mosques, the world over, wherever the time of prayer comes to these practicing Muslims.

## VII. BOWING TO THE WILL OF GOD

While raising the walls of Ka'bah along with Ishmael (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh) prayed to the Lord to make them and their descendants as Muslims and to show them the places and the rites to be celebrated there so that they might bow before the will of the Lord and continue worshipping Him there.

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ.<sup>375</sup>

And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the Temple [House (of Allah)], [they prayed:] 'O our Sustainer! Accept Thou this from us:

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<sup>374</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 379.

<sup>375</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 2.127-28 (Al-Baqarah).

for, verily, Thou alone art All-Hearing, All-knowing! O our Sustainer! Make us surrender ourselves unto Thee [Make ourselves Muslims before Thee], and make out of our offspring a community that shall surrender itself unto Thee, and show us our ways of worship, and accept our repentance: for, verily, Thou alone art the Acceptor of repentance, the Dispenser of Grace!<sup>376</sup>

The prayer to become Muslims essentially means bowing before the one and the Only Lord God of the universe with firm faith in his almightiness, absolute wisdom, providence, foreknowledge and His authority to judge on the day of reckoning. As such, those who confess themselves as Muslims, must have full faith in the absolute wisdom of the Lord. They, therefore, cannot dare to complain against any commandment of the Lord. They must believe that their ultimate wellbeing consists on their unconditional obedience to all the commandments of the Lord. In case they try to impose their own will against the will of the Lord or complain against Him like the Israelites, they are no longer Muslims in the true sense of the term. God has, therefore, announced forgiveness and great reward to those who submit their will to him:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ  
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ  
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ  
وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا.  
وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ  
أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَالًّا مُبِينًا.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 27.

<sup>377</sup> Al-Qur'ān 33:35-36.

Verily, for all men and women who have surrendered themselves unto God, and all believing men and believing women, and all truly devout men and truly devout women, and all men and women who are true in their word, and all men and women who are patient in adversity, and all men and women who humble themselves [before God], and all men and women who give in Charity, and all self-denying men and self-denying women, and all men and women who are mindful of their chastity, and all men and women who remember God unceasingly: for [all of] them has God readied forgiveness of sin and a mighty reward. Now whenever God and His Apostle have decided a matter, it is not [fitting] for a Believing man or a believing woman, to claim freedom of choice insofar as they themselves are concerned: for he who [thus] rebels against God and His Apostle has already, most obviously, gone astray.<sup>378</sup>

The fulfillment of a prophecy or a promise can also be taken as the proof of its truth. As such, the fulfillment of all the prayers of Abraham (pbAh) in his descendants through Hagar affirms that the said prayers pertained only to Abraham's descendants at Makkah. Obviously, no prayer of Abraham (pbAh) with regard to his progeny in Canaan is on the record. The Israelites always continued to assert their own priorities against the will of God. They very often rebelled against the verdict or the commandments of God conflicting with the selfish interests of the Israelites. It is due to their same trend of mind that the Israelites refused to accept any prophets who happened to be non-Israelites. They assigned first priority only to their own race and temporal interests

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<sup>378</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 645.



of the Israelites rather than the selfless surrender before the will of the Lord. Instead of declaring themselves as *Muslims* (those who surrender to the will of God), they preferred to be called the Israelites or the Judaists which reflects their affinity with their race rather than their subservience to the Lord. Even while proclaiming themselves as the only people of God, they did not forget to highlight themselves as the chosen people.

## ABRAHAM'S PRAYER FOR THE PROMISED MESSENGER (pBAH)

The last and the most important among the prayers of Abraham (pbAh) was his supplication that Almighty Allah may graciously send amongst them (i.e. the Ishmaelites living at Makkah), a messenger who might rehearse the signs of the Lord to them, and instruct them in scripture and wisdom to sanctify them. This was, perhaps, the most important of the prayers, Abraham (pbAh) had ever made during his life. It has been recorded in the Qur'ān as follows:

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ  
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ.  
(...). رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ  
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.<sup>379</sup>

And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the Temple, [they prayed:] 'O our Sustainer! Accept Thou this from us: for, verily, Thou alone art all-hearing, all-knowing! O our Sustainer! Make us surrender ourselves unto Thee, and make out of our offspring a community that shall surrender itself unto Thee, (...)! O our

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<sup>379</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 2:127-129.

Sustainer! Raise up from the midst of our offspring an apostle from among themselves, who shall convey unto them Thy messages, and impart unto them revelation as well as wisdom, and cause them to grow in purity: for, verily. Thou alone art almighty, truly wise!<sup>380</sup>

Since the prayer was being made at Makkah, therefore, Abraham (pbAh) prayed to the Lord for a prophet of their own. Until that time, God had declared Abraham (pbAh) as امام الناس i.e. 'leader of humankind' and Lot (pbAh) served as a messenger under the supervision of Abraham (pbAh). Subsequently, Ishmael (pbAh) too served as a messenger to promote and promulgate the faith and teachings of Abraham (pbAh) in the region. Both Lot (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh) were not bestowed with any law or preachings other than those revealed by the Lord to Abraham. Abraham (pbAh) knew about the advent of the great prophet in future about whom the Lord had taken the covenant from all his prophets while they were yet at their souls. The Qur'ān asserts:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَضُكُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَضْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ.<sup>381</sup>

And, Lo, God accepted, through the prophets, this solemn pledge [the covenant of the prophets from the followers of earlier revelation]: 'If, after all the revelation and the wisdom which I have vouchsafed unto you, there comes to you an apostle confirming the truth already in your possession, you must

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<sup>380</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 27.

<sup>381</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 3.81.

believe in him and succour him. Do you'—said He—'acknowledge, and accept My bond [Covenant] on this condition?' They answered: 'We do acknowledge it.' Said He: 'Then bear witness [thereto], and I shall be your witness.'<sup>382</sup>

This was perhaps the first and the most important covenant taken by the Lord from His prophets. It bound them to tell their followers about the advent of the promised prophet and to advise them to submit to him for guidance towards the straight path. Abraham (pbAh), therefore, beseeched the Lord for the advent of the said prophet among his descendants at Makkah. As against thousands of prophets among the Israelites, he implored the Lord only for raising the single 'promised prophet' among the Ishmaelites. There had been no prophet between Ishmael (pbAh) and Muhāammad (pbAh) among the Ishmaelites. The prayer of Abraham (pbAh) implored the Lord specifically for raising the prophet of their own, i.e. of the Ishmaelites. So Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) was the fulfillment of his prayer.

After Abraham (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh) fulfilled his duty to foretell about the advent of the promised prophet in the following words:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until **Shiloh** come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.<sup>383</sup>

In spite of the fact that the Israelites as well as the Christians have always been striving hard to conceal

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<sup>382</sup> 'Allamah Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 1980, p. 77-78.

<sup>383</sup> Gen 49:10.

the actual import of the prediction by effecting corruption in the text of the Bible, yet they failed to obliterate the identification of the said prophet. We shall discuss the same in detail subsequently. Suffice it to point out here that many authorities among the Jews and the Christians have defined 'Shiloh' as '*the one to whom it belongs*'. J. B. Taylor writes:

A reference of peculiar difficulty comes in Gn. 49:10, 'the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come' (RV). The Heb. 'Ad Ki-Yabo' Siloh can be rendered in several ways. (i) As RV, taking *Shiloh* as a *messianic title*. (ii) As RVmg 'till he come to Shiloh', with the subject as Judah and the fulfillment in the assembling of Israel to Shiloh in Jos. 18:1, when the tribe of Judah nobly relinquished the pre-eminence it had formerly enjoyed. (iii) By emending siloh to selloh and translating the LXX '*until that which is his shall come*', i.e. '*things reserved for him*', a *vaguely messianic hope*. (iv) Following a variant reading in LXX, '*until he come whose it is whatever 'it' may be (Onkelos says it means the kingdom)*'.

The last of these was generally favoured by the fathers, while the first does not seem to have been put forward seriously until the 16<sup>th</sup> century except in one doubtful passage in the Talmud. Against (i) is its uniqueness: *nowhere else is Shiloh used as a title for the Messiah and the NT does not recognize it as a prophecy*.<sup>384</sup> If it were taken as a title it would have to mean something like '*the peace-*

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<sup>384</sup> It means that those who take it as a prophecy in favour of Jesus (pbAh) are mistaken.

*giver*<sup>385</sup>, but this is not very natural linguistically. (ii) is plausible, but it scarcely fits in with what we know of the subsequent history of Judah; nor is it usual for a patriarchal blessing to have such a time-limit. A variant to get round that objection is the translation 'as long as people come to Shiloh', i.e. 'forever', but it strains the Heb. (iii), (iv) and (v) involve a minor emendation, and the renderings leave much to the imagination, but Ezk. 21:27 (v. 32 in Heb.) shows that a similar construction can stand; indeed, Ezk. 21:27 is probably a deliberate echo and interpretation of Gn. 49:10. The use of *se-* for the relative particle is, however, normally regarded as late (but cf. Jdg. 5:7).<sup>386</sup>

It is not relevant to dilate upon the issue in the present context. It is worth noting here that the above excerpt suggests '*shiloh*' as a messianic reference and the words 'peace-maker' may also be taken as another version of '*comforter*' as appearing in John (14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7) which indicates no one except Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh). Similarly, Ezk 21:27<sup>387</sup> also predicts about the promised Prophet.<sup>388</sup>

The said denotation implies that the Israelites will be holding the sceptre of authority and law giving only

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<sup>385</sup> It is an appropriate title of Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh).

<sup>386</sup> *The New Bible Dic.*, ed. J. D. Douglas, et al. (Leicester: Inter-varsity Press, 1963), s.v. '*Shiloh*', p.1177..

<sup>387</sup> I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no *more*, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it *him*.

<sup>388</sup> The editor, Mr. A. S. Ghauri, has dilated upon this prophecy in a fair detail in his Urdu work 'Muhāammad Rasūl Allah kae bārae maen Bible kī Chand Paeshīn Goe'iyān'. It is available from Al-Mawrid, 51-K, Model Town, Lahore.

as intermediaries for a specific term. Since it actually belongs to the promised one, therefore, it must reach him in due course.

According to the prophecy of Jacob (pbAh), the sceptre of authority, i.e. spiritual as well as temporal had to be shifted from the Jews to whom it belonged. The said authority to promulgate the everlasting law and to formalize the Final and immutable Covenant of God with humankind belonged to none except Muhāammad (pbAh). The prophecy of Jacob (pbAh), therefore, stood fulfilled with shifting of the 'sceptre' and law giving from the Israelites to the Ishmaelites.

After Abraham the sceptre of authority and the privilege of giving law belonged temporarily to Moses and reached ultimately to Muhāammad (pbAh) to whom it belonged. Moses (pbAh), too, was duty bound to foretell his followers about the advent of the messenger of the covenant referred to in the Qur'ān (3:81). He, therefore, fulfilled his duty appropriately through these words:

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; (...). **18.** I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. **19.** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. **20.** But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other

gods, even that prophet shall die.<sup>389</sup>

These predictions were fulfilled in Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) who was raised among the Ishmaelites, i.e. the brethren of the Israelites. He was like Moses (pbAh) in many respects. After receiving the word of God, Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) dictated the same to the scribes accurately and exactly in accordance with the revelation.<sup>390</sup> The said immutable message is preserved by the Muslims by memorizing the same and also by written records to maintain the word of God in its pristine purity. Another distinctive feature of the said prophet was that he did not speak in the name of other Gods. Anyhow, St. Paul introduced two new Gods and met with his fate, as the Bible says:

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.<sup>391</sup>

There had been so many prophets among the Israelites but none of them claimed to be the promised prophet nor had any of them some conspicuous likeness with Moses (pbAh). This was so

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<sup>389</sup> Deu 18:15, 18-20 KJV.

<sup>390</sup> The editor, Mr. A. S. Ghauri, has dilated upon this prophecy in a fair detail in his Urdu work '*Muhāammad Rasūl Allah kae bārae maen Bible kī Chand Paeshīn Goe'iyān*'. It is available from Al-Mawrid, 51-K, Model Town, Lahore. Its English version can be seen in his English work '*Muhāammad Foretold in the Bible by Name*', available from the same publisher.

<sup>391</sup> The Bible Deu 18:20 KJV.



because the said prophet had to be raised not from the Israelites but from their brethren, i.e. the Ishmaelites. Israelites have, therefore been eagerly awaiting the advent of the promised prophet. Even John the Baptist sent his messengers to Jesus to know whether he was 'the one', John said:

Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?<sup>392</sup>

In response to it Jesus did not affirm that 'he was'; Matthew has tried to confuse the issue by reference to the miracles performed by Jesus (Mat 11:4-6, Luk 7:18-28). The promised prophet was to appear at Mount Paran along with ten thousands of his saints with a fiery law issuing forth from his right hand (Al-Qur'ān 3:81<sup>393</sup>, Deu 18:15<sup>394</sup> & 33:2<sup>395</sup>). These prophecies along with Jer 31:31-34<sup>396</sup> stood fulfilled entirely in the actual

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<sup>392</sup> The Bible, Mtt 11:3 KJV.

<sup>393</sup> Al-Qur'ān 3:81 says:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْنُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَضُكُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَضْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

<sup>394</sup> The Bible, Deu 18:15 says:

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

<sup>395</sup> The Bible, Deu 33:2 says:

And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand *went* a fiery law for them.

<sup>396</sup> The Bible Jer 31:31-34 says:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a

history of the world in Prophet Muh□ammad (pbAh) at Makkah.

The Christians insist to prove Jesus (pbAh) as the promised one. Due to their insatiable thirst to elevate Jesus Christ (pbAh), they have applied hundreds of different as well as self contradictory appellations on him. They designate him with numerous titles such as prophet and suffering servant of the Lord, the lamb of God, the shepherd, the high priest of heaven, the bread of life, the way, the comforter, the intercessor, the only begotten son of God, the first born of God, the God-Man, the Lord God, the ultimate savior of humankind etc. By their own words, they apply each and every power, sanctification, glory, nobility and grace to him. It is due to the same trend of thought that they try to prove Jesus (pbAh) as the promised prophet in the likeness of Moses (pbAh). There are reasons to believe that except two or three similarities of Jesus with Moses (pbAh) and other prophets of Israel, there is a vast list of dissimilarities

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new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

between them. Besides this, Jesus (pbAh) and his followers did not fulfill the appellations of the promised prophet as detailed in the OT. As against Jesus (pbAh), Muhammad (pbAh) was the promised prophet of the Lord who had numerous similarities with Moses (pbAh), and fulfilled all the predictions of the prophets as we have discussed in detail elsewhere.

Jesus (pbAh) being the last prophet among the Israelites seems to have fulfilled his duty to inform the Israelites about the advent of the Holy Prophet. He rather pinpointed the said prophet by name.

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ.<sup>397</sup>

And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and *giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.*' But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, 'this is evident sorcery!'

In their eagerness to erase predictions about the promised prophets, the evangelists as well as their followers perverted the words of Jesus (pbAh) in such a manner that the predictions stood either obscured or the same were applied to Jesus (pbAh). Among such predictions was the parable of the tenants in the vineyard:

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<sup>397</sup> Al-Qur'ān 61:6.

When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*<sup>398</sup>

It is pertinent to note here that 'Kingdom of God' can be established on earth only when people accept no one as their King except the Lord. The vice regent of the Lord was required to establish the kingdom of God by ruling in accordance with the Law of the Lord. All people including the vice regent are subject to the same law. So far as the Christian followers of Jesus (pbAh) are concerned, they never succeeded to establish the kingdom of God on earth because they neither considered the Lord God as their king nor they accepted the law of the Lord supreme over the Law of their monarchs or their community. So far as St. Paul is concerned, he rather suggested abrogation of the law of God to provide freedom to his followers. In addition to it, he suggested replacement of subservience to God and to His law by wholehearted obedience to the state authorities, i.e. the Romans.<sup>399</sup>

Jesus (pbAh) had in fact foretold the Israelites about the advent of the Promised Prophet by naming him as

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<sup>398</sup> Matt 21:40-43 KJV.

<sup>399</sup> Rom 13:1-7.

a comforter, he said:

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.<sup>400</sup>

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.<sup>401</sup>

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.<sup>402</sup>

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.<sup>403</sup>

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father,

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<sup>400</sup> Joh 14:15-17 KJV.

<sup>401</sup> Joh 14:25-26 KJV.

<sup>402</sup> Joh 14:29-30 KJV.

<sup>403</sup> Joh 15:26-27 KJV.

and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.<sup>404</sup>

It was the same prophet through whom the new or the final covenant of the Lord was going to be formalized and promulgated throughout the world. Aside from the predictions of Abraham (pbAh), Jacob (pbAh) and Moses (pbAh) Jeremiah (pbAh) too revealed the new covenant as under:

(...): But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;* and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.<sup>405</sup>

At the outset it be appreciated that the sages and scribes of Israel seem to have mutilated the message to apply the same to the Israelites. It is, however, clear, beyond any doubt, that '*with the house of Israel,*

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<sup>404</sup> Joh 16:7-15 KJV.

<sup>405</sup> Jer 31:31-34 KJV.

*and with the house of Judah'* is quite irrelevant, and, as such, a spurious addition or a mutilation in Jer 31:31. Similarly, '*house of Israel*' in Jer 31:33, being quite misfit in the context, seems to be an interpolation in the text.

It is further to be noted that '*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;*' can in no case be applied to the Jews or the Christians, because: (1) as far as Christians are concerned, they do not even observe the Law, not to speak of learning it by heart. (2) As regards the Jews, no doubt they believe in the Law and deem it expedient to act in accordance with it, but none of them puts it in their heart. It clearly shows that 'the House of Israel' and 'the House of Judah' is certainly an interpolation.

According to Jeremiah, the new covenant will also be different from the Old one in the sense that it will not be consigned to the central sanctuary of the Israelites or the church of the Christians. Every one will have unrestricted access to it because instead of the stone-tablets or scrolls, it shall be written on the hearts of the believers. As such, millions of the Muslims have preserved the entire words and contents of the Qur'ān, i.e. the new covenant, by committing it to memory. One would scarcely find Muslims in the world who have not memorized certain essential parts of the Qur'ān to be compulsorily recited in their mandatory prayers offered five times a day. The Imām in each and every mosque in the world recites at least a 30<sup>th</sup> part of the Qur'ān (i.e. one Pārah, which means: 'piece') in *Tarāvīh* □ Prayers during

each night of the month of Ramadān. As such, the recitation of the entire Qur'ān is completed during the congregations of *Tarāvīh* prayers in every mosque during the month of Ramadān. The prophecy of Jeremiah has, therefore, been fulfilled entirely in the Muslim community in the past and is being fulfilled till today.

## The prophecy:

I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.<sup>406</sup>

stands fulfilled among the Muslims because each one of them knows the contents of the Law and need not learn the same from the priests. Since the Qur'ān has been written on their hearts, therefore, they need not carry on phylacteries<sup>407</sup> on their foreheads or tassels on the fringe of their garments. Similarly, the Muslims need not bow before the priests or call them Rabbi, i.e. my God. Instead of the priests, the popes or other intercessors, the people will be addressing their lord directly for anything needed by them. Hence, all will know the Lord from the least to the great. No one can deny the fact that the said prophecy stands fulfilled only in the Muslims i.e. the people of the new covenant which was formalized and implemented through Muhāmmad (pbAh), the Holy Prophet

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<sup>406</sup> Jer 31:33 KJV.

<sup>407</sup> 'Phylactery' means: 'a small leather box containing biblical passages written in Hebrew worn by Jewish men at morning prayer.'



promised by the Lord.

The Israelites have always been eagerly waiting for the advent of the promised prophet. Even John the Baptist had enquired from Jesus (pbAh) if he was the said prophet but Jesus (pbAh) did not reply in the positive (Mat 11:3-6, Luk 7:18-28). The reason for his silence was nothing else than the following words of the Prophet Moses (pbAh):

And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.<sup>408</sup>

The Prophecy 'he shined forth from mount Paran,' unequivocally applies to the Prophet Muhāammad. In this respect it be noted that Gen 21:20-21 is the earliest reference to Paran in the OT. This pertains to the dwelling place of Ishmael (pbAh) in the 'wilderness of Paran' as can be noted from the following:

And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.<sup>409</sup>

Although the composers of the OT have tried to show Paran in the desert of Sinai but it cannot be upheld by any evidence from the history and the environments of the region.<sup>410</sup> The location of Paran in the Sinai Peninsula has not been mentioned anywhere except

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<sup>408</sup> Deu. 33:2 KJV.

<sup>409</sup> Gen 21:20-21 KJV.

<sup>410</sup> A study on it has been made in this author's article on 'Paran'.

in the Bible. Historically Paran, i.e. valley of Makkah, has been the dwelling place of Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh). It has always been the central point of the Ishmaelites living in Arabia.

As regards the word '*Lord*' used in the above noted verses, it perhaps applies to Moses (pbAh) and Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh), i.e. the prophets of the covenant. Moses (pbAh) had formalized the covenant of the Lord at Mount Sinai. It is, however, an undeniable historical fact that Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh) appeared at Paran i.e. Makkah with 10,000 of his saints in 8<sup>th</sup> of Hijra, i.e. about 630 A.D. He conquered Makkah and got the house of the Lord vacated from the polytheists worshipping the Idols there. After the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet promulgated there the final, immutable and everlasting covenant of the Lord on earth. The said covenant was undoubtedly a fiery law which was imposed among the Muslim community strictly in accordance with the words and true spirit of the commandments of the Lord. As such, Muhāammad (pbAh) had been the only prophet who succeeded to establish such a society which was ruled by the Law of the Lord. It was the first time since Adam that the Kingdom of God stood established on earth by the Holy Prophet and his immediate successors. Jesus (pbAh) neither succeeded to make the covenant with the Israelites nor did he implement the fiery law to institute Kingdom of God at any place on Earth.

Prophet Muhāammad (pbAh), the great-great-grandson of Abraham (pbAh) and Ishmael (pbAh), is therefore, the fulfillment of all the prophecies quoted

above. Lord sent him as a blessing to all the creatures in the universe. Almighty Allah declared him as a blessing to all the creatures in the universe:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ.<sup>411</sup>

We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.

He is the holder of the final and the everlasting covenant of the Lord. Practicing Muslim followers of Muhammad (pbAh) exceed in numbers than the total practicing followers of all religions of the world collectively. No wonder that Islam, the religion of the Lord, is the fastest growing religion in the world.

In view of all this, the derogatory remarks of the Israelites against Ishmael (pbAh) and Hagar are of no impact on the descendants of Hagar. Anyhow, the attempt of the Israelites to denounce Hagar and Ishmael (pbAh) has not gone unpunished by the Lord. The Lord continued to inflict slavery and subservience on the Israelites before other nations of the world ever since the death of Joseph (pbAh) till today. Their boastful claims were of no benefit to them nor could they frustrate the design of God in the actual history of the world.

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<sup>411</sup> Al-Qur'ān 21:107.

## THE BIBLE PERPETUATES OPPRESSION AND SLAVERY

According to the Bible, it was permissible to take slaves of nations that happened to be around the Israelites.

If you need slaves, you may buy them from the nations around you. You may also buy the children of the foreigners who are living among you. *Such children born in your land may become your property* [stress added], and you may leave them as an inheritance to your children, whom they must serve as long as they live. But you must not treat any Israelites harshly.<sup>412</sup>

These verses grant divine approval for slavery.

In the recorded history of the world, the Egyptians are perhaps more conspicuous for forced labor from the slaves and others on mass scale.<sup>413</sup> The Israelites themselves had remained slaves under them and

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<sup>412</sup> Lev 25:44-46 KJV.

<sup>413</sup> See *Britannica*, 15<sup>th</sup> Edn., 1982: MACROPAEDIA, 27:227, under the heading: 'servitude'; sub-heading 'The Ancient Near East'.

taste of slavery could not be forgotten by them even long after their exodus from Egypt. They learnt no lesson from it. On the contrary, they themselves subjugated the Canaanites, Amorites, and many other nations who were the original occupants of the land in and around Canaan. The Israelites either massacred all the original inhabitants of the lands, or treated the survivors cruelly. All atrocities of Israel against their defeated enemies have, however, been justified by invoking special commandments from the Lord or curses from Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh) and others.

After the Israelites, there are glaring examples of Barbarous treatment of slaves at the hands of the Greeks and the Romans. Even prior to Christianity, the Greeks and the Romans maintained that they enjoyed racial superiority over other nations. They also believed that other people were created only to serve them. Hence, the citizens of Rome were entitled to all the human rights while slaves were treated merely as chattels<sup>414</sup>, without having any basic rights whatsoever. A slave was treated as personal property of the master who could dispose him off in whatever way he might wish. The institution of slavery seemed to be a natural order of creation. Slaves, as such, were born only to serve the superior races such as the Greeks and the Romans who had divinely approved rights to rule over other people that were born only to serve them. Some went to the extent of believing that the slaves had no souls. They also held

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<sup>414</sup> 'Chattels' means: 'any movable property'.

a similar view about women. At times, the masters (i.e. the Greeks and the Romans) were free to punish their slaves to such an extent that the torture could take even the life of the slaves. In such a case, the master could be punished sometimes by a fine but normally no cognizance was taken of the savagery either by the state or the society.<sup>415</sup>

The institution of slavery continued to exist in the same condition even after the Christianization of the West. St. Paul further authenticated the institution of slavery as an article of faith for his followers. That, according to Paul, a servant or a slave was required to serve his master as Christ (pbAh), is evident from the following:

<sup>5</sup>Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, *as though you were serving Christ* [stress added]. <sup>6</sup>Do this not only when they are watching you, because you want to gain their approval; but with all your heart do what God wants, *as slaves of Christ* [stress added]. <sup>7</sup>Do your work as slaves cheerfully, *as though you served the Lord* [stress added], and not merely human beings. <sup>8</sup>Remember that the Lord will reward each of us, whether slave or free, for the good work we do.<sup>416</sup>

Prior to this, the cruel masters were abhorred as oppressors. It was St. Paul who, by his ingenious interpretation, converted the abhorred oppressors

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<sup>415</sup> See *Enc. Britannica*, 15<sup>th</sup> Edn., 1982: MACROPAEDIA, 27:228, under the heading: 'Servitude'; sub-heading: 'Greece and Rome'.

<sup>416</sup> The Bible, Eph 6:5-8 GNB.

into the likeness of Christ. Hence, the service or even perhaps worship of the cruel masters was a valuable service useful for the Roman oppressors.

It seems that while writing these lines, St. Paul had in his subconscious mind the Roman masters and the people of other nations enslaved by them. He, therefore, felt obliged to advise the slaves for faithful obedience and reverence to their Roman masters in the manner the Christians were obliged to worship the Christ. This Biblical warrant for slavery continued to be appealed for the development of the slave trade by the west during about two thousand years in the past. The Church itself emerged as the greatest feudal Lord owning hundreds of thousands of slaves put under hard task masters on the land and trade of the church throughout the Christendom. Inhuman treatment with the slaves patronized by the church and rigid Christianity of dark ages, therefore, had no parallel in the annals of history. Leckey, the Christian historian of the nineteenth century, says:

The Christian millennium from the fourth to the fourteenth century was *one of the most contemptible periods of history* [stress added].<sup>417</sup>

The great historian, Gibbon, acknowledges:

The banners of the church had never been seen on the side of the people.<sup>418</sup>

In the Introduction to his book, *Christianity in History*,

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<sup>417</sup> As quoted by Ahmed D Azhar, *Christianity in History* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Kashmīrī Bāzār, 1968), p. 8.

<sup>418</sup> As quoted by A. D. Azhar, *Christianity in Hist.*, p. 8.

Mr. Ahmed. D. Azhar says:

Incidentally, Christianity was happily married to power in the days of the Roman Emperor Constantine, too—against the people [stress added]. The wedlock continued even into the protestant times, and Luther, the great reformer, was himself on the side of the Princes, not of the people, and as a matter of fact urged the Princes to wipe out the peasants revolting against their tyranny if they (the Princes) wanted to enter the Kingdom of God! (Pamphlet by Luther: Wider die Mordischen and Raubischen Ratter Der Bauern—'Against the Murderous Peasants'). *His reform was Anti-pope not Pro-people, It was a palace revolution* [stress added]. It would, incidentally, be typical of all Christian reforms in most Christian centuries.<sup>419</sup>

In view of this and numerous other instances from history, we find Bertrand Russell fully justified to ascribe *the opposition of every human movement to Christianity*.

No wonder the worst exploitation of the slaves occurred in the new world where the White colonizers of the West continued showing brutality, firstly, towards the original inhabitants of America and subsequently with the Negroes enslaved and deported to America from their colonies in the African Continent. Eventually, after fierce and prolonged struggle in Europe, slavery was formally ended at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-15 but it had no effect on perpetuation of slavery in the American continents. These enslaved Black Africans were refused human

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<sup>419</sup> Ahmed D Azhar, *Christianity in History* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Kashmīrī Bāzār, 1968), p. 8.



rights for centuries together and their slavery as well as exploitation continued to be justified on the basis of the teachings of the Bible until about the year 1960.

Although the condition of the slaves had started showing improvement in the USA after the Civil War and the proclamation of emancipation on January 1, 1863 by Abraham Lincoln, the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the USA (1809 - 1865) and the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment (1865), yet the process of attaining equal human rights had been extremely slow and discouraging for the former slaves/or other people of the black race. Subsequently, a good deal of improvement occurred due to the incessant efforts of Black clergyman Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) who was also awarded a Noble prize in 1964. On August 28, 1963, the King delivered a stirring address to an audience of more than 200,000 civil rights supporters in the USA. He said:

*I have a dream* that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, *that all men are created equal* [stress added]. (...) *I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character* [stress added].

Although King's efforts won many supporters even from the white Americans who supported his civil rights movement, yet no major improvement in the racial discrimination could be discerned during his lifetime in the USA. Eventually Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968 while his dream was yet to be materialized. Others continued to fight for their equal

rights with the white Americans, but in spite of succeeding on legal, theological and theoretical grounds, the black Americans fail to enjoy any practical parity with the White Americans till today.

Greeks and especially Antiochus IV had shown extreme brutality to exterminate Judaism and to replace the same with Hellenism. Romans, too, did not lag behind in the said treatment towards the people in the lands conquered by them. Being successors of the Greeks, they too, considered themselves as super-humans and thought that the people belonging to the nations conquered by them were born only to serve them. As such, the main motif of the Romans was to keep subdued nations under their tight control forever. Romans, therefore, adopted the policy of destroying the nations or the individuals who dreamt about freedom from Rome. Keeping everlasting control on enslaved people had, therefore, always been priority of the Romans for which they spared no brutality whatsoever. Even prior to the conquest of Palestine, their treatment with different nations shows the same.

Historians of the west eulogize the Roman power and terror which according to them was an idealistic system of polity for the world empire of Rome. To bring an end to the said tyrannical and inhuman system of keeping other nations under their slavery or control was extremely distasteful and unacceptable to them. The historians, therefore, continue to lament over the sad demise of the tyrannical empire of Rome feted and fattened by sucking the blood and drenching dry the bodies of their subjects and the

slaves. By rising to power, they had the conviction that the Romans were super-humans bestowed with divinely approved rights to rule over other nations of the world for ever. According to them the oppressed people were the property of the oppressors who neither acknowledged their humanity nor allowed them any equality in the basic human rights. 'Might is right' was the only guiding principle of their polity while law, justice, human rights were all reserved only for the citizens of Rome. The lands, wealth, chattels and the people in the regions conquered by them were simply the property of the Roman conquerors who could keep or destroy the same at their own sweet will. During the said age of power, plunder and oppression, one could hardly conceive of any justice or human consideration for the subjects of Rome.

As a matter of policy, Romans usually killed most of the defeated people on the battle field in the houses or lands while the survivors were at their mercy either to be left on the lands to produce for the Romans or to be deported to other regions as captives of war. Such deportees were either sold as slaves or they were retained to enhance the pool of inexpensive labor in various parts of the empire.

About 7 years after the conquest of Jerusalem, Caesar, Pompey and Crassus renewed an agreement known as '*Trium Virate*' BC 56. Crassus thereafter took over government of Syria (BC 55-53) from Gabinus. He was already the richest person in the Roman World but he did not hesitate to plunder the temple at

Jerusalem in violation of his oath. Eventually, the tyrant met his fate in the arid waste of Mesopotamia where he stood defeated and slain.<sup>420</sup> The plunder of the temple aroused bitter feeling of resentment against Romans which instigated the Jews to cooperate with the victorious Parthians who tried to drive Romans out of Asia. Cassius the brave lieutenant of Crassus somehow managed to lead the shattered legions of Crassus back to Syria. He had hardly 10,000 men with him. In spite of the unfavorable circumstances, Crassus succeeded to suppress the insurrection in Judea. He executed all the leaders of the rebels and sold about 30,000 of the Jewish warriors in the slave market in about 51 BC.

It was due to the said policy that right from the inception of the Empire, the Romans had started gathering ever increasing number of slaves. *Enc. Britannica* has recorded:

Of the number furnished from this source a few particulars from the time of the mature republic and the first century of the empire will give some idea. In Epirus, after the victories of Aemilius Paullus, 150,000 captives were sold. The prisoners at Aquae, Sextiae and Vercellae were 90,000 Teutons and 60,000 Cimbri. Caesar sold on a single occasion in Gaul 63,000 captives. But slavery, as Hume has shown, is unfavorable to population. Hence a regular commerce in slaves was established, which was based on the '*systematically-prosecuted hunting of man*' [stress added], and indicated an entire perversion of the primitive institution, which was essentially connected with conquest. The pirates

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<sup>420</sup> Jews Under the Roman Rule, p. 45.

sold great numbers of slaves at Delos. It was the chief market for this kind of wares; and these sales went on as really, though more obscurely, after the successful expedition of Pompey. There was a regular importation of slaves to Rome, brought to some extent from Africa, Spain and Gaul, but chiefly from Asiatic countries—Bithynia, Galatia Cappodocia and Syria.<sup>421</sup>

Individuals owned thousands of slaves. Pliny writes:

Saecilius a freed man of the time of Augustus left by his will as many as 4,116 slaves.<sup>422</sup>

He fixes the proportion of slaves to free men as that of 3 to 1 for the time between the conquest of Greece (146 BC) and the reign of Alexander Severus (AD 222-235). The entire number in Italy would thus have been 20,832,000 in the reign of Claudius. The said policy of keeping the weaker nations and the individuals under subjugation or slavery persisted in the successors of Rome for more than 1600 years after the reign of Alexander Severus mentioned above. Even the well acclaimed period of renaissance and enlightenment in the west failed to bring any change in the mental attitude of the colonizers to accept any equality in the human rights for all the descendants of Adam and Eve. The successors of the Roman Empire continued to follow the same policy of enslaving the free people or importing the slaves from abroad. Spain and France were more conspicuous among the nations who held the largest number of slaves. We learn that

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<sup>421</sup> *Enc. Britannica* (London: William Benton Publ.), 20:775.

<sup>422</sup> Marcus Tullius, Pliny, *Letters and Treatises of Cicero and Pliny* (Cosimo Inc, 2000), 9:393 (footnote).

the western part of St. Domingo, formerly belonging to Spain, had been occupied by Buccaneers who ceded to France at the Peace of Ryswick in 1697. *Enc. Britannica* has recorded:

So vast was the annual importation of enslaved negroes into this colony before 1791 that the ratio of the blacks to the whites was as 16 to 1. In that year there were in French St. Domingo 480,000 blacks, 24,000 mulattoes<sup>423</sup> and only 30,000 whites.<sup>424</sup>

Although no exact details about the treatment of slaves are presently available, yet we know that, for centuries, the colonizers continued to exploit the inexpensive labor force consisting of the slaves who had been the main factor to promote cultivation of land and for speedy industrialization and development in the American and Australian continents as well as in the southern parts of Africa and the south-eastern parts of the Asian continent. Keeping in view the miserable condition of the slaves and the original inhabitants of the lands, mentioned above, one feels that Karl Marx's<sup>425</sup> classic theory of exploitation of the

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<sup>423</sup> 'Mulatto' means: 'The offspring of a Black person and a person of European descent'. (Arabic: '*al-Khulāsī*').

<sup>424</sup> *Enc. Britannica*, 20:781.

<sup>425</sup> 'Karl Marx: 1818-83': Brought up in a Jewish family which converted to Protestantism in order to escape anti-Semitism. He Studied at the Univ. of Bonn (1835-36) and Berlin (1836-41), where he associated with the radical followers of Hegel, who were concerned particularly with the critique of religion. (...) emigrated to Paris, where he became a communist (...) in Paris he began his lifelong friendship with Friedrich Engels. (...) in collaboration with Engels wrote (...) the famous *Communist Manifesto* (1848),

proletariat<sup>426</sup> by the bourgeois<sup>427</sup> is nothing as compared to the woes of the ill-fated victims of the colonizers.

Due to a large number of slaves deported from the lands conquered by Rome during the centuries preceding the Christian Era, the slaves formed the main part of the workforce that ran the economy of Rome. Although the institution of slavery and the system of forced labor has always been imposed by the strong upon the weak in the world, yet Rome was perhaps the only country possessing the highest ratio of slaves as compared to their masters. By about 150 B.C., the enslavement of foreign population through military conquests had increased to such a proportion that the number of slaves far surpassed the citizens of Rome. While slavery has been considered against

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a masterpiece of political propaganda which ends with the celebrated rallying-cry '*The workers have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of all lands, unite!*' With Engels he also reorganized the Communist League which met in London in 1847. (...) in the reading room of the British Museum he began the researches which culminated in the publication of his (...) magnum opus *Das Kapital*, one of the most influential works of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this last work, which remained unfinished at his death, he developed his mature doctrines of the theory of *surplus value, class conflict and the exploitation of the working class*, (*Chambers Biographical Dic*, 1997, p.1243).

<sup>426</sup> 'proletariat' means: 'the whole body of wage-earners (esp. manual workers) contrasted with the owners of industry (the bourgeoisie)' (*Oxf Advanced Learners*).

<sup>427</sup> 'bourgeois' means: 'person of the class that owns property or engages in trade' (*Oxf Advanced Learners*).

human dignity and causing moral deterioration in the society, the immoral effects of the institution were also disastrous for Rome.

As said earlier, the slaves were not considered as persons but property of their masters. They were treated harshly and oppressively. Owners could abuse, injure or kill their slaves without any fear of legal consequences. Slaves were kept alive only for the benefit of the people of Rome. Their services were utilized in the fields and mines and they were subjected to all type of hard physical labor according to the requirements of their masters. Due to high concentration and oppressive treatment with the slaves in the heartland and certain colonies of Rome, they felt depressed and deprived to such an extent that they rebelled against their masters repeatedly. Most conspicuous among such revolts were the first, second and the third servile wars.

## Servile Wars

The first servile war of 135 BC lasted for about three years in Sicily. It was led by one Eunus a former slave claiming to be a prophet while a Sicilian named 'Cleon' was his military general. At one time these chiefs of slaves had gathered around them about 2,00,000 slaves including perhaps women and children. After some initial victories against the Romans the slave rebels stood utterly defeated and destroyed by the Roman armies.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> servile war (104-100 BC) too was an



unsuccessful slave uprising against the Romans on the island of Sicily. Salvius was the leader of this rebellion. He amassed thousands of trained and equipped slaves including two thousand cavalry and 20 thousand infantry along with many men under the command of 'Athenian' from the west of Sicily. The rebellion was quelled by Roman council Manius Aquilas after great and prolonged effort.

No detailed description of the cruelties inflicted by the Romans on the slaves in the first and second servile wars is available; yet it is to be noted that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Servile War preserves perhaps the most horrifying demonstration of Roman brutality with the slaves fighting against them. The tragic incident occurred on Via Appia called the 'Queen of Roads' which was constructed in between Rome and Appia in about 312 BC.

Spartacus (109-71 BC) was the most notable leader of the slaves in the third *Servile War*. He was leading the oppressed people fighting for their freedom against slave owning aristocracy of Rome. Spartacus reportedly belonged to nomadic stock of Thrace (present day southwestern Bulgaria, northeastern Greece) He is thought to have been a deserter from Roman army who was sold as a slave to a trainer of gladiators at Capua. Plutarch writes that Spartacus's wife, a prophetess of the same tribe was also enslaved with him. In 73 BC he escaped with 70 other gladiators and took refuge on Mount Vesuvius where he was joined by many other slaves increasing their number from 90,000 to 1,20,000 men.

In year 73 BC Spartacus and his companions defeated

two Roman Armies while in year 72 BC they defeated another three armies of Rome. Eventually the Roman Senate sent eight legions i.e. about 40000-50000 of the trained Roman Soldiers led by Marcus Licinius Crassus who succeeded to besiege the renegades and killed a large number of the rebels on the battlefield. Similarly the legions under the command of Ganicus and Caustus separated from the main army killed about 12,300 of the slaves. Meanwhile Pompeii's army had returned from Spain and they too intercepted and killed many slaves who were escaping northwards. Eventually Spartacus' forces were finally routed completely with the vast majority of them being killed on the battlefield. It is believed that Spartacus died on the field but his body could never be found. The story ends in its most tragic part where the 6,000 survivors of slaves stood captured alive by the legions of Crassus who crucified all of them lining all the way from Rome to Capua.

Emperor Hadrian had constructed an Amphitheatre at Santa Maria the real Old Capua. It is recorded:

It was near this site that Spartacus, a gladiator-slave, began the slave War in 73 BC. Marked for death in the arena, he had nothing to lose. He eventually gathered nearly 100,000 runaway slaves and so frightened the Romans establishment that, after killing Spartacus in battle, they set an example that was cruel even for them. Along the Appia, from Capua to Rome, they crucified 6,000 of Spartacus's followers."

Louis S. Glanzman has recorded the heart rending depiction of the barbarity of the Romans vide his painting appearing in the national geographic

(Washington: June, 1981), p. 726-727. The following note appears beneath the painting:

Rebellion ended in agony for 6,000 slaves crucified on the Appia in 71 BC: led by the slave-gladiator Spartacus, an army of 100,000 runaways outfought Romans forces for nearly three years. Legionaries and their slaves strung the captured along the 132-mile route between Rome and Capua--- and left them to rot.

Isn't it a literary crime that 2100 years have passed since the incident but with the exception of the depiction given above we find neither a detailed description nor regret or concern of the historians with the greatest tragedy play performed on Via Apia for beautification and commendation of the so-called 'Queen of the Roads'. The tragic display of the gruesome and lamentable naked bodies of the freedom fighters stretched over 6000 crucifixes and left there to rot all along the Road from Rome to Capua found no Mel Gibson or any one else to narrate or display "The Passion" to commemorate the ignoble death awarded to freedom fighters in the most tragic and torturous manner. (Mel Gibson's Film '*The Passion of the Christ*' and the book named '*Mel Gibson's Passion and Philosophy*' ed. George J. E. Grecia (Chicago: Open Court; and Illinois: La Salle, USA, 2004).

Keeping in view the human aspect of the mass crucifixion stated above one finds that the cruelty of Via Apia far exceeds the cruelty of the 'Via Crucia' or the way of the Cross which, aside from the passion has ignited anti-Semitism through political propaganda

against the Jews incriminating them as Christ-killers while exculpating the Romans from any indictment.

From the humanitarian point of view it may be noted that no difference between the victims of the servile wars, the hundreds of thousands of Jews and others killed or crucified by the Greeks and the Romans in the lands conquered by them and the crucifixion of Jesus the Jew and a prophet of Israel crucified by the Romans as a disturber of peace with the death note tied on his forehead reading 'The King of Jews'. The said note cannot therefore be ignored as everlasting evidence to the effect that the victims of the servile wars, all the freedom fighters of the Jews and Jesus himself were killed or crucified for the same crime. Since Jesus stood crucified evidently for a crime of political nature therefore the apologies proffered by the synoptic gospels to absolve the Romans of the crime serve only as a smoke screen to hide the true features of the tyrants. Factually, the Romans had subjected millions of oppressed peoples and slaves to torture and death and they never felt ashamed of it. The crucifixion of Jesus was, however, interpreted as atonement for their own sins past or present besides the followers of the theology of St. Paul. The Jewish race to which Jesus actually belonged stood condemned for eternal persecution and torment. No notice was taken of the fact that according to his mission, Jesus had been trying to retrieve only the lost sheep of the house of Israel till his death. Only the Jews had been the earliest apostles, disciples and companions of Jesus but the Hellenized Christians have always been stigmatizing and persecuting the Jewish race as

## Antichrist.

It is also to be observed that the passion for Jesus is not for a Jew or a prophet who lived and died as a man in Palestine. It is perhaps the tragic death of their God that arouses pity and passion among the Christians being creatures and worshipers of the Christ. Being themselves the successors of Rome they absolve themselves of the crime and incriminate the Jews. They continued to inflict various kinds of punishments on them since the conquest of Palestine by Pompey in about 63 B.C. till the recent past.

Human history with perhaps the exception of the Romans can produce no match for large scale torturous deaths which the Republicans engraved over the annals of history as an everlasting legacy of Rome. Although the historians in the West continue to admire the triumph of Rome over helpless human beings who gave their lives fighting for their freedom yet the brutal treatment of the Rome with the oppressed people has no match for its barbarity in the world. No doubt, the display of the dead bodies of 6000 slaves left to rot on cross depicts the dominance of Rome over the world. Although the Cross is the most hateful sign for the oppressed yet it stands as a symbol of the success of Rome. St. Paul was, therefore, the first theologian to interpret the cross in such a manner that instead of a disgusting sign of torture, curse and ignoble death, it became sanctified to be worshiped as a sign of glory, salvation and life everlasting for the Christians. In about 313 A.D. with the edict of Constantine toleration was extended to all

the followers of different faiths throughout the Roman Empire while the Cross stood venerated and worshiped as a symbol of success and the sign of salvation through Christ.

It is also to be observed that the Hellenized society around the time of Jesus Christ was such that normally they felt no hesitation to adopt or abandon gods depending upon their expectations of benefits or inflictions from them. Since St. Paul's theology promised extravagant benefits to the converts, including holiness, salvation and life everlasting therefore his followers did not shrink from worshipping the Cross or the crucified figure of Jesus Christ whom the Romans had scourged and crucified in the manner reserved only for punishment of their slaves. The Icon consisting of the Cross and the naked dead body of Jesus therefore became primary object of worship throughout the Roman Empire.

St. Paul had continued to persecute the earliest and true followers of Jesus Christ for many years after his death. Taking a sudden turn thereafter St. Paul started interpreting the events in such a manner that Jesus the victim of Rome failing to avert his ignoble death stood resurrected as God and savior of mankind. Since then both cross and the crucified are being worshiped by the Christian followers of St. Paul.

## Destruction of Carthage

Carthage<sup>428</sup> is said to have been founded in 814 BC by

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<sup>428</sup> 'CARTHAGE' was an ancient city in N. Africa in the vicinity

Phoenician emigrants from Tyre led by mythological princess Dido. After the capture of Tyre by the Babylonians in 6<sup>th</sup> century BC Carthage became the natural leader of the Phoenician colonies in North Africa and Spain. Carthage had a prolonged struggle with the Greeks which centered mainly on Sicily. About 540 BC the Carthaginians repulsed a Greek attempt to land in Corsica while in 480 BC a Carthaginian attempt to conquer the whole of Sicily was defeated by the Greeks in Himera. From the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Carthage was engaged in a series of wars with Rome called '*Punic wars*<sup>429</sup>', which eventually ended in complete defeat of Carthage in 146 BC. The said defeat brought an end to Hannibal's<sup>430</sup>

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of Modern Tunis. It grew fast and flourished for almost seven centuries as one of the ancient world's wealthiest and most powerful communities. It was eventually defeated and razed by Rome.

<sup>429</sup> 'PUNIC WARS' 3 wars between Carthage and Rome in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. The final outcome of these wars was the triumph of Rome and the destruction of Carthage. By eliminating this powerful rival, Rome took a decisive step forward in its march toward empire (*Merit Students Enc*, 15:390).

<sup>430</sup> Here is a brief account of 'Hannibal' adopted from the *Merit Students Enc*, 1967, 8:391:

Hannibal': Carthaginian general. Born about 247 BC. Died Bithynia, about 182 BC. Hannibal, one of the greatest generals and military strategists in history, led Carthage against Rome in the *Second Punic War*. His tactics were so successful that he fought in Italy for 15 years without losing a battle, although Rome remained unconquered. As a young boy, Hannibal became dedicated to the task of avenging

expeditions against Rome. Carthage was plundered and burnt by the Romans while the site stood utterly destroyed and plowed over by the Romans. All human habitation was forbidden for the next 25 years. The *population of Carthage before its destruction by the Romans is said to have numbered over 7,00,000 which stood either massacred or enslaved.*

In about 122 BC the Roman senate entrusted Marcus Fulvius Flaccus with the foundation of a colony on the site of Carthage. Later on Julius Caesar also sent a number of landless citizens there and in 29 BC Augustus made it the centre of the Roman Province of Africa. Thereafter it became known as '*Colonia Julia Carthago*' just as Jerusalem after its utter destruction by the Romans and massacre of about 1.1 million Jews in the year 70 AD by the Army of Titus was reconstructed by Hadrian as a Roman city with its new name i.e. *Aelia Capitolina*. (*Enc.Britannica* and

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Carthage's defeat in that war. In 221 BC, Hannibal succeeded his brother-in-law Hasdrubal as commander of the Carthaginian army in Spain. In 216 BC he won the greatest victory over the largest army the Romans had ever assembled. At the battle of Cannae, which ranks as one of the bloodiest battles in ancient history, Hannibal's forces slaughtered more than 50,000 Roman soldiers. For the next 13 years, he maintained himself in Italy. His most notable success was the capture of Taranto in 212 BC, by which he gained direct communication with Carthage by sea. In 203 BC he was recalled to Carthage. In 202 BC he was defeated near the northern coast of Africa. He withdrew into exile. In 190 BC the Romans defeated him for the last time at Eurymedon River in southern Asia Minor. He then fled to Bythinia. The Romans demanded his surrender. He refused to surrender and ended his life by swallowing poison.



Hutchinsons 1996). These instances show at one hand brutality of Rome while on the other their policy to Hellenize the conquered lands by eliminating the original inhabitants and colonizing the same with the Roman citizens. As such destruction of a nation and its capital along with devastation of land has usually been described by the western historians with pride and without any passion narrative for the victims of Rome. Passion narrative, therefore, was reserved only for Jesus Christ to inculcate his own race who continued to be persecuted by the successors of Rome till today.

It was only on the basis of power and control over many nations in Asia, Europe and Africa that the oppressors successfully continued to transfer their guilt to the oppressed. All nations who had either failed to conquer Greece, Rome or other countries in the west or did not succeed to prolong their control on them were designated as barbarians or brutes while innumerable inhuman and barbarous crimes of the Romans and the Greeks are presented as fully justified acts of the conquerors. So far as humaneness is concerned the same did not extend beyond the citizens of Rome. People in the lands conquered by them had no rights at all. Humanitarian preachers in the west today must therefore have a fresh look on the heinous crimes committed by the Romans against humankind especially the people in the lands subjugated by the Greeks or the Romans and especially those who were taken as slaves.

The said legacy was upheld by later successors of

Rome throughout their colonies in Africa, Australia, America and in other colonies in the East. The slave trade and treatment with the slaves as well as the original inhabitants of the American and Australian continents at the hands of the Spanish, British and the French colonists are well recorded in the annals of history. Perhaps the most glaring example of the atrocities of the Americans and their allies can be found in brutish and indiscriminate bombing and massacre of hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children throughout Iraq, Afghanistan and its borders. The Americans and their allies tested the most destructive newly invented devices on innocent human beings in the said lands. No human beings believing in any God could have suffocated such a large number of Afghans by transporting them through containers meant for transportation of goods as the Americans did in the Afghan War. The uncalled for invasion of Iraq as well as Afghanistan, destruction of life and property shows an utter lack of human values in these so-called torch-bearers of Civilization. Similarly, the stories of inhuman torture to the prisoners at Guantánamo Bay will continue to serve as a slur on the face of civilization of the Americans.



## INTERPOLATION IN THE TEXT

The scribes<sup>431</sup> and the redactors<sup>432</sup> of the OT have made numerous interpolations in the text to accord with the self interest of Israel. Here the verses of Gen. 16:1-9 are also conspicuous as interpolation between Gen. 15:4-5<sup>433</sup> and 16:10<sup>434</sup>, because they disturb the sequence of the narration and convey no good purpose except inflating the ego of the Israelites by showing Hagar as the slave of Sarai, which is incorrect. This is obviously a fabrication by certain

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<sup>431</sup> 'scribes' (Heb *sopherim*) Three meanings are connected with the verb *saphar*, the root of *sopherim*— (a) to write, (b) to set in order, (c) to count. (...). The *sopherim* were so called because they wrote out the law (W. Smith's Dic, 595).

<sup>432</sup> 'redactors' means 'editors.'

<sup>433</sup> (...). And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This [the steward of your house, Eliezer of Damascus] shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (Gen. 15:4 KJV).

<sup>434</sup> And the angel of the Lord said unto her [Hagar], I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude (Gen. 16:10 KJV).

scribes of Israel who have amalgamated different oral traditions or sources and filled the gaps to recompose the text. Under the title 'Hagar', *Enc. Judaica* suggests the same:

HAGAR, Egyptian maidservant of Sarah (Sarai). The tradition involving Hagar is preserved in two narrative cycles. The passage in Genesis 16:1-16 records how Hagar was given to Sarai's husband Abraham as a concubine (1-13). When Hagar conceived, she became contemptuous of Sarai, who in turn, abused her until she fled into the desert (4-6). There, by a spring, Hagar encountered an angel, who exhorted her to return (7-9) and gave her a favorable oracle concerning her future son to be named Ishmael (10-12). Hagar named the place in honor of the event (13-14). Finally, she bore Ishmael (15). The second tradition (Gen 21:8-21) records that after Sarai – now Sarah – had borne Isaac, she demanded the expulsion of Hagar and her son. According to the Septuagint, she was distressed to see Ishmael playing 'with her son Isaac' upon receiving divine reassurance (12-13), Abraham reluctantly banished Hagar (14ff.) to the desert, where she and Ishmael were saved from death by divine intervention (17 ff.).<sup>435</sup>

The *Enc. Judaica* also notes:

Contemporary critical scholarship regards the first tradition about Hagar as predominantly J (Jahwist) with P (Priestly) inserts comprising vss 1a, 3, 15 – 16, the second is agreed to be entirely E (Elohist). As a whole however *the literary transmission of these*

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<sup>435</sup> *Enc. Judaica* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn., ed. Fred Skolnik (NY: Thomson Gale, nd.), 8:205, s.v. 'Hagar', by Maurice Friedberg/ S. David Sperling (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

*narratives has long presented difficulties. The problems are both literary and chronological* [stress added]. The literary problems arise from the fact that both accounts involve the banishment of Hagar (16:6; 21:14), the encountering of an angel who provided an oracle (16:7-12; 21:17-18), and the presence of a well (16:14; 21:19). It has been suggested that two independent versions of Hagar's banishment originally existed, the first referring to her pregnancy and the second to the time after Isaac's birth. Consequently, some scholars resolve the assumed conflation by judging 16:9 to be a late redaction whose purpose was to give sequence to the narratives; others assume that the naming of Ishmael was deleted in the second tradition.<sup>436</sup>

These passages from *Enc. Judaica* suffice to show that even the most eminent scholarship of the Jews acquiesce to the fact that the parts of Genesis under discussion are not the word of God and cause inconsistencies in the biblical statements and present such difficulties that can not be resolved. This indirect admission by the highest scholarship of Israel suggests that the difficulties or contradictions in the text have been caused by the human hand because the work of God must be free from all errors and contradictions.

The last phrase of Gen. 21:12, i.e. '*In Isaac shall thy seed be called*' can also be identified as an interpolation. Its interpolation comes to light by its contradiction with the very next verse stated below:

And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a

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<sup>436</sup> *Enc. Judaica* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn., 8:205f.

nation, *because he is thy seed* [stress added].<sup>437</sup>

Since the Lord Himself confirms Ishmael (pbAh) as the seed of Abraham (pbAh) and also calls Ishmael (pbAh) his son three times i.e. in Gen.17:23, 25, 26, therefore, the interpolation '*In Isaac shall thy seed be called*' is a blatant forgery in the text. This phrase has obviously been inserted in the text as an after thought to limit the all-inclusive nature of God's covenant with the seed of Abraham (pbAh) as we find below:

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations<sup>438</sup> for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee<sup>439</sup>, and to thy seed<sup>440</sup> after thee. <sup>8</sup>And I will give unto thee<sup>441</sup>, and to thy seed<sup>442</sup> after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan<sup>443</sup>, for an everlasting possession<sup>444</sup>; and I

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<sup>437</sup> Gen 21:13 KJV.

<sup>438</sup> The plural form 'generations' is to be noted: not only some single generation.

<sup>439</sup> Which includes all the offspring of Abraham, and not only 'Isaac'.

<sup>440</sup> Not only some particular 'seed' but absolutely all the 'seed'.

<sup>441</sup> Here, as well, it includes all the offspring of Abraham, and not only 'Isaac'.

<sup>442</sup> It may also be noted that 'Ishmael' has also been declared as the 'seed of Abraham' in unequivocal terms (Gen. 21:13, etc).

<sup>443</sup> Either 'all the land of Canaan' is a later addition, or the word 'Paran' has been deleted from the text, to particularize the covenant in favour of the 'Israelites'.

<sup>444</sup> Annals of history bear clear evidence that Canaan has

will be their God. <sup>9</sup>And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. <sup>10</sup>This is my covenant<sup>445</sup>, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.<sup>446</sup>

The said interpolation also becomes conspicuous due to its contradiction with the subject matter of Gen. 17:2-14 which had assured that Abraham (pbAh) was to be the ancestor of many nations while the covenant covered all his descendants including slaves born in his house or bought with money from any stranger, 'which is not of thy seed'. (Gen 17:12) This means that all those who belonged to Abraham (pbAh) in any manner or had any attachment with him, irrespective of 'blood' or 'seed' relation, had to be circumcised without any distinction of their status, blood or race whatsoever. It was specially stressed that:

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not been an 'everlasting possession' of the Israelites. Unto the middle of the twentieth century, even the entry of the Jews in Canaan remained almost impossible for about nineteen centuries. Even before that they could not even dream of the entry into Canaan for about seven centuries: after the present declaration unto the death of Moses. During their partial possession of the land, this 'everlasting possession' remained breaking from time to time; which alludes either to the disability of the covenanter to fulfil his part of the covenant or to false pretensions of the Israelites..

<sup>445</sup> It is to be noted here that the covenant of circumcision has been uninterruptedly observed by the Muslims and the Arabs in the same way as it has been observed by the Jews; and the Jews cannot claim any special prerogative to it.

<sup>446</sup> Gen. 17:7-10 KJV.



He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the *uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant*<sup>447</sup> [stress added].

Since it was an everlasting covenant for all the followers of Abraham (pbAh), therefore, our Christian brothers who are uncircumcised have broken their covenant with the Lord.

Abraham (pbAh) was himself 90 years old and his son 13 years when he circumcised himself and his son Ishmael (pbAh). All the male members under the influence of Abraham (pbAh) were circumcised as participants in the covenant. That the covenant was all-inclusive of the male members of the family and followers of Abraham (pbAh), stands confirmed by its implementation by Abraham (pbAh) himself. All the descendants and followers of Abraham (pbAh), therefore, conform to the same tradition ever since the time of the patriarch.

It will not be out of place to refresh ourselves with the promise of the Lord with Abraham (pbAh) while commanding him to leave Haran for Canaan.

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and *in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*<sup>448</sup> [stress

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<sup>447</sup> Gen 17:13-14 KJV.

<sup>448</sup> Gen 12:2 – 3 KJV.

added].

The promise of the Lord to make of Abraham (pbAh) a great nation and making his name great in whom all the families of earth will be blessed, essentially precludes any possibility of restricting the blessings to Isaac (pbAh) and his descendants. Thus, either God had erred to extend blessings through Abraham (pbAh) to all the families of earth, or the second part of Gen. 17:19 and Gen. 17:21 are obvious interpolations in the text. In any case, the said verses are incompatible with overall blessings of the Lord to all the people of the world through Abraham (pbAh).

There is no doubt that the covenant of circumcision had already been formalized with Abraham (pbAh) and the same stood implemented by him with the participation of Ishmael (pbAh) and others, as mentioned in Gen. 17:23-27. It was later that the Israelites amended it in their favour. It was after finalization of the covenant of circumcision with Abraham (pbAh) that God changed the name of Sarai to Sarah and said:

And I will bless her, and give thee *a son also of her*: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother of nations*<sup>449</sup>; kings of people shall be of her.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> 'she shall be a mother of nations' seems to be an obvious interpolation by the redactor, to balance the account with Hagar and Ishmael, as God had promised with Abraham (Gen 17:20):

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee, Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

As regards the phrase 'mother of nations', she was the mother of only two nations, i.e. 'the Israelites' and 'the

'A son *also* from her' denotes that Abraham (pbAh) already had a son from another wife. The Lord, therefore, promised to bless Sarah as well. This suggests that Gen. 17:19b and 17:21 are obvious interpolations to give a new turn to the facts by changing the word of God. As a matter of fact, the covenant stood already established even before God gave good tiding of a son also to Sarah.

These verses can also be marked as interpolation because in spite of repeated assurance from the Lord to establish a covenant with Isaac (pbAh) and his seed (Gen. 17:19 & 17:21), no new covenant was ever established with Isaac (pbAh). As such, either the Lord did not fulfill His promise with Isaac (pbAh) and his descendants or the relevant parts of Gen. 19 & 21 were fake additions from some later redactors of the Genesis.

Because, as a matter of fact, the word of God can never fail, therefore, it can be safely asserted that Gen. 17:19b<sup>451</sup> and 17:21<sup>452</sup> are blatant interpolations in the text.

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Edomites'; while six other sons of Abraham and the Ishmaelites had many nations as their descendants. It is ridiculous to say that God might have pronounced a promise that He did not fulfil.

<sup>450</sup> Gen 17:16 KJV.

<sup>451</sup> And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him (Gen. 17:19).

<sup>452</sup> But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year (Gen. 17:21).

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